

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY



139 261

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY





OPERA AND DRAMA.



---

PROSE WORKS OF RICHARD WAGNER

Uniform with this Volume.

**JUDAISM IN MUSIC.** Being the Original Essay together with the Later Supplement. Translated from the German (*Das Judenthum in der Musik*) and Furnished with Explanatory Notes and Introduction. By E. EVANS, *Scout*. 12mo, *net*, 1.25.

**ON CONDUCTING.** Translated by E. DANNREUTHER. Second Edition. 12mo, *net*, 2.00.

**BEETHOVEN.** With a Supplement from the Philosophical Works of Arthur Schopenhauer. Trans. by EDWARD DANNREUTHER. Third Edition. 12mo, *net*, 2.40.

**HANDBOOK TO THE VOCAL WORKS OF BRAHMS.** An Historical, Descriptive and Analytical Account of the Entire Works of Johannes Brahms. Treated in the Order of their Opus Number. Preceded by a Didactic Section and followed by Copious Tables of Reference. For the Use of Concert-Goers, Pianists, Singers and Students. By EDWIN EVANS, *Scout*. Thick 8vo, cloth, *net*, 3.50.

**THE RISE OF MUSIC.** An Inquiry into the Development of the Art from its Primitive Putting Forth in Egypt and Assyria to its Triumphant Consummation in Modern Effect. By JOSEPH GODDARD. With numerous Illustrations. 12mo, *net*, 2.50.

**THE POST-BEETHOVEN SYMPHONISTS.** Critical Essays on Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, Liszt, Strauss and Others. Translated from the Second German Edition. By ARTHUR BLEA. With Twelve Portraits. 12mo, cloth, gilt top, *net*, 1.75.

---

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

---





RICHARD WAGNER.

# OPERA & DRAMA

(OPER UND DRAMA)

1. Opera and the Essence of Music.
2. The Stage-Play and Dramatical Poetic Art in the Abstract.
3. Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future.

BY

RICHARD WAGNER

TRANSLATED BY

EDWIN EVANS, SENR., F.R.C.O.

*Author of "Handbook to the Works of Brahms," "The Relation of Tchaikovsky to Art Questions of the Day," "How to Compose," etc.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

NEW YORK :  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

LONDON : WILLIAM REEVES.

MCMXIII

*Printed by The New Temple Press, 17 Great Road, London.*

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

---

IT has long been recognised in Germany that the best way to render the effect of Wagner's life-work permanent is to secure a sufficient attention to his prose writings; and not only an attention sufficient in amount, but of the right kind.

There have hitherto been two customs prevailing with regard to these works; each, no doubt, natural and excusable, but neither of them much calculated to further the master's interest from the higher standpoint. One of these has consisted of making use of books merely for reference—say for the purpose of settling disputes with regard to the composer, of quoting his aphorisms, or of drawing instruction as to points of detail falling within the range of his specialities. The other has been merely an indulgence of curiosity in following Wagner's treatment of social questions; a certain polemical interest in the latter having been aroused both by his boldness in harnessing them to the musical subject, and by the energetic or even somewhat provocative choice of terms employed.

All this, however, amounts to a misuse, and proceeds from an imperfect appreciation of the composer's point of view; for, as Wagner's art-conceptions always relate in some way or other to the Drama, and most of his writings bear upon that question with an earnestness showing its elucidation to have been his life's object, the unity imparted to his work by this singleness of purpose not only entitles his writings to be consistently viewed from that standpoint but justifies all the analogies which he draws into service, rendering them thereby exempt from all application—save in the illustrative sense which led to their introduction.

To the same earnestness may be traced the fact that the chronological order of Wagner's prose writings will at all times be a wise course to follow in the perusal of them; not because of any intentionally progressive arrangement on his own part, but because his very sincerity caused the outcome of circumstances to result in these productions occurring in very much the same order as that in which their study requires to be undertaken.

Of all his literary works the present is, in many respects, the most important; however restricted may have hitherto been the privilege of becoming familiar with its contents. The first of the two contributory circumstances to this result is that of the work's excessive difficulty; an obstacle to its appreciation of which Wagner himself was perfectly aware, as the reader may easily perceive by referring to the author's confession of this defect to Constantin Frantz (see §21) upon the occasion of dedicating to the latter the second edition. The

apparent incoherence to which he thus refers leads us to the second cause of hindrance alluded to—a cause of which we should have had no right to expect any account from Wagner himself, and his mention of which therefore exhibits to us his complete singleness of purpose in a most admirable light.

The fact is that, when Wagner started these writings, he was not himself perfectly clear upon the subject of them. They present indeed many passages which seem, so to speak, like a struggle for enlightenment—a speculation in monologue—rather than a regulated communication of particulars already decided on; and this is evidently what was in his mind when, in writing to Uhlig (May, 1882) he says:

The only satisfaction with which I can regard my literary work of recent years is caused by the feeling that, by its means, I became clear to myself.

The whole feature is one which very greatly concerns a translator of the present work; for the temptation to expatiate in the reader's interest is one which occurs with embarrassing frequency in consequence of "obscurities" which are only obscure in default of a painstaking discrimination. Moreover, there are many German peculiarities of expression, remarks upon which, in a work of ordinary kind, might be usefully adduced in foot-note form. Had such a practice been indulged, however, there would have been scarcely a page, from end to end, in which such annotation would not have become burdensome; for, if the German philosophic style



is, at all times, sufficiently involved, that of Wagner may easily be accepted as of a particularly abstruse order.

In arriving at a decision the object considered has been that of securing a maximum utility for the main body of readers; whose interest may be assumed to consist in the desire to increase their stock of knowledge by the most direct method. The knowledge in question is not that of Wagner in the merely personal sense—and still less of peculiarities of the German language—but of the operatic question, pure and simple; and searchers for it deserve to be so thoroughly regarded as readers after Wagner's own heart that a spirit of loyalty would alone require from first to last, the whole endeavour of the version to be in their interest. The idea has therefore been to elucidate only in cases of absolute necessity; but, on the other hand, to have recourse to every legitimate means for bringing the work under the reader's own control—or, in other words, for enabling him to help himself. Apparent obscurity of one passage, for example, may frequently and easily be explained away by reference to another part of the work having an incidental bearing upon the same issue; but it must be confessed that Wagner, in his arrangement of the book, has shown himself completely oblivious of all difficulties of interpretation, in respect of which the reader is entirely left to take his chance.

There are, for example, in the Wagner original no subject-headings of any description whatever, the whole being presented in one unbroken sea of prose-matter, interrupted merely by an occasional

break; the cast being therefore into paragraphs, mostly of extreme length. It is not only that an exterior of this kind is most uninviting—not to say deterring—to an English reader; but it also creates enormous difficulties of reference. Provision has therefore been made of chapter headings, section and sub-section headings, as well as subdivision of paragraphs with numbers and separate titles for each; the whole being concentrated into an analytical index having copious cross-references by the collective use of which it would almost seem impossible for any subject alluded to in the course of the work to be otherwise than instantly available.

The utility of such features would have been deemed too obvious to require that any reference should be made to it but for the risk otherwise of the reader attributing to the original the subject-headings which had been merely adopted by the translator. It would perhaps be too much to expect these headings always to provide a perfect epitome though it may fairly be claimed that in their choice the utmost care has been exercised; and they may, in any case, be thoroughly relied upon to serve the purpose of identification of sections and subsidiary passages of the work—an advantage which will commend itself more to the real student than to the casual reader.

As to the detail of the translation, there was obviously the choice between a microscopic fidelity to the original phrase-constructions rendering a fluent English version an utter impossibility, and a practical fidelity to the Wagnerian sense and spirit, coupled with the use of terms and phrases

current amongst ourselves and therefore best calculated to convey the author's meaning to those to whom the present version is specially addressed. Neither of these courses can be said to possess a monopoly of advantage; but it is scarcely to be questioned that an immense balance of practical utility exists in favour of the latter, and that, accordingly, has been the plan adopted.

In the result, therefore, the hope seems reasonable that, as now presented, the work will not (at all events to the earnest reader) prove to be of extraordinary difficulty, especially as the facilities of reference already alluded to enable a greatly increased amount of help in interpretation to be derived from context. In the case of such close reasoning as that of Wagner the aid derivable from various parts of the work in elucidating a vague passage is one not lightly to be set aside; for without a keen appreciation of its value no reader is likely to make much progress in the subject.

It seems impossible to conclude these introductory observations without—even at the risk of appearing to overstep the translator's vocation—paying homage to the grandeur of the original work; the enlightening character of which is such that, without its study, no true knowledge of the operatic question is conceivable—however free the allowance for divergencies of view.

EDWIN EVANS, SENR.

LONDON.

# CONTENTS.

## PART I.

### OPERA AND THE ESSENCE OF MUSIC.

*(DIE OPER UND DAS WESEN DER MUSIK.)*

	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE .....	v
Epitome of Original Preface .....	1
ORIGINAL PREFACE .....	3
Epitome of Dedicatory Preface to Second Edition ...	9
DEDICATORY PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION	11
Epitome of Introduction .....	17
INTRODUCTION .....	19

---

Epitome of Chapter I .....	33
----------------------------	----

## CHAPTER I.

SERIOUS OPERA .....	35
✓ Music's Relation to Poetry .....	35
Evolution of Musical Means .....	35
Earnest and Frivolous Tendencies .....	36

	PAGE
HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SERIOUS OPERA .....	37
The Aria as Springing from the Volkslied .....	37
Disturbance in the Natural Relation of Constituents .....	37
The Ballet as Springing from the Folk-Dance .....	38
Recitative as Springing from Church Song .....	39
Characteristics of Gluck's New Departure .....	40
Domination of the Composer in Opera .....	41
Subordination of the Poet .....	42
Extension of Operatic Musical Forms .....	43
Characteristics of the Cherubini, Méhul, Spontini Opera .....	44
Special Traits of Spontini .....	45
<hr/>	
THE POET'S ISOLATED POSITION .....	46
Progress Unassociated with Improvement in the Poet's Condition .....	46
Estimate of the Poet's Position at the Time of Spontini .....	47
Mistaken Impressions of both Poet and Composer .....	48
Limitation of the Poet's Means of Expression .....	49
Confusion of Ideas resulting from False Relation of Poet and Musician .....	50
Sincerity of the Effort put forth at the Period of Spontini .....	51
<hr/>	
Epitome of Chapter II .....	53
<hr/>	
CHAPTER II.	
LIGHT AND COMIC OPERA .....	54
Reflective and Naïve Tendencies in Opera Compared .....	54
Mozart and Mendelssohn Compared .....	55
Mozart's Noble Intuition .....	56
The Relation of the Poet to Mozart's Inspiration .....	58
Mozart's Power of Purely Musical Expression .....	59
Mozart and his Imitators .....	60
<hr/>	
ROSSINI .....	60
The Tendency after Mozart .....	60
Closer Account of the Aria .....	61
Misapplication of the Volkslied .....	62

# CONTENTS.

xiii

	PAGE
The Aria's Unduly Luxurious Expression .....	63
Mozart's Treatment of the Aria .....	64
Rossini's Treatment of the Aria .....	64
Rossini's Bid for Popularity .....	65
The Rossini Style, an Opposition to Previous Efforts ...	66
The Rossini Flood of Success .....	66
Rossini's Pandering to the Public .....	67
Rossini's Command of the Public Voice .....	68
Rossini's General Relation to Opera .....	70

---

THE TRANSITION TO MEYERBEER .....	72
State of Operatic Affairs at Meyerbeer's Appearance .....	72
The Chagrin of Rossini at Meyerbeer's Success .....	73

---

Epitome of Chapter III .....	75
------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER III.

THE OPERA OF POPULAR MELODY .....	76.
The Mistakes of Rossini's Predecessors .....	76
Effects of Transition to the Rossini Style .....	77
Omnipotence of Melody .....	78

---

WEBER .....	79
Features of Weber's New Departure .....	79
Affinities between Operatic and Political Progress .....	80
The National Tendency .....	80
Weber and the Volkslied .....	81
The Result of Weber's Treatment of the Volkslied .....	82
The German Volkslied .....	83
Weber's Musical Material .....	84.

---

AUBER .....	86
The Progress of Melody after Weber .....	86
French Musical Traits .....	86
French Operatic Material .....	87
The Search for National Melody .....	88
Rivalry of Rossini and Auber .....	89

	PAGE
"Masaniello" and "William Tell" .....	90
Revival of Interest in the National Feature of Opera .....	90
General Relation of the Volkslied to Music .....	91
Misuse of the Volkslied in Opera .....	92
The Composer's Disabilities in Applying Folk-Song ...	92

---

Epitome of Chapter IV .....	95
-----------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV.

THE PEOPLE AS REPRESENTED IN OPERA .....	96
The Natural Folk Aspiration .....	96
Greek and Shakespearean Tragedy .....	97
Dramatic Foundation of the Opera .....	98
The Opera's Abject Condition .....	99
The Opera Chorus .....	100

---

HISTORICAL MUSIC .....	101
Need for the Effect of Historical Costume .....	101
Continued Subjection of the Poet .....	102
Futility of the Musician's Mistaken Endeavour .....	103
The Scene-Painter's and Costumier's Vocation in Opera .....	103
The Historical Trait in Music .....	104
Religious Music as Operatic Material .....	105
The Operatic Style Resulting from the Historical Trait .....	106
The Mixture of Styles .....	107
Effects of Lack of Dramatic Purpose .....	108
The Musical Penalty of Error .....	109

---

Epitome of Chapter V .....	111
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER V.

INSTRUMENTAL MELODY .....	113
Absolute Music and the Opera .....	113
Application of Aria-Material to Instrumental Use .....	114
Separate Development of Instrumental Melody .....	115

# CONTENTS.

XV

PAGE

BEETHOVEN .....	115
Artistic Error of Instrumental Melody's Development .....	115
Beethoven's Mistake .....	116
Beethoven's Great Inspiration .....	117
The Idiom of Beethoven's Later Works .....	118
The Incentive Provided by the Beethoven Style .....	119
Imitation of Beethoven's Methods .....	120
Transition to Programme Music .....	121
The German Abstract Musical Style .....	121

---

BERLIOZ .....	122
The Basis of Berlioz's Inspiration .....	122
Berlioz's Distorted View of Beethoven .....	123
Berlioz's Copious Employment of Means .....	124
General Estimate of Berlioz .....	125

---

THE APPEARANCE OF INSTRUMENTAL AS OPERATIC VOCAL MELODY .....	126
Previous Subordination of the Orchestra in Opera ...	126
The Forms of Song and Dance still Dominant .....	127
Degradation of the Orchestra .....	128
Greater Freedom of Pure Instrumental Music .....	128
Vocal Use of Instrumental Melody .....	129
The "Characteristic" Style .....	130

---

Epitome of Chapter VI .....	133
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VI.

MODERN HISTORICAL CHARACTERISTIC OPERA	136
The Peculiar Merits of Gluck and Mozart .....	136
Eclipse of the Poet Effected by Rossini .....	138
Rossini's Relation to the Librettist .....	138
Weber's Relation to the Librettist .....	139
Weber's Mistaken Aspiration .....	140
Weber's Work in "Euryanthe" .....	141
Weber's Impossible Task .....	142
Weber's Mode of Procedure .....	142
The Accepted Popular Test of Operatic Melody .....	143



	PAGE
Points of Artistic Success in Weber's "Euryanthe" ...	144
Nobleness and Sad Conclusion of Weber's Endeavour	145
<hr/>	
MEYERBEER .....	145
Cosmopolitanism of Gluck and Meyerbeer Compared ...	145
Meyerbeer and Absolute Music .....	147
The Meyerbeer Tactique .....	148
Degradation of Modern Opera .....	149
Deplorable Outcome of Mistaken Operatic Views ...	150
<hr/>	
THE CHARACTERISTICALLY HISTORICAL QUALITY IN OPERA	151
Survey of the Opera's continually Increasing Independence of the Poet .....	151
Further Increase of the Musician's Domination .....	152
"Grand Opera" and its Librettists .....	153
The Respective Relations of the Poet to Auber, Rossini and Meyerbeer .....	154
Meyerbeer and Scribe .....	155
Meyerbeer and Weber with their Librettists .....	156
Meyerbeer's Ideal Libretto .....	156
Meyerbeer's Triumph .....	158
<hr/>	
OF "EFFECT" OR RESULT WITHOUT CAUSE .....	158
Real Force of the Term "Effect" .....	158
Attempts at a Substitute for Real Poetic Basis .....	159
Case for Illustration of the New Operatic Methods ...	160
Their Insincerity and Want of Purpose .....	162
Further Exposition of the Incongruities of Modern Opera .....	164
<hr/>	
THE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR IN THE OPERA'S CONSTITUTION	166
Meyerbeer and his Public .....	166
Meyerbeer's Occasional Inspiration .....	167
Cause of his Special Inspiration .....	167
Cause of the Musician's Undeveloped Power .....	168
Evils of the Use of Narrow Forms Epitomised .....	169

	PAGE
Epitome of Chapter VII .....	171

## CHAPTER VII.

THE RELATION BETWEEN MUSICIAN AND POET .....	173
--	-----

The True Positions of Composer and Librettist .....	173
---	-----

---

THE NEW OFFSPRING OF MELODY, BEETHOVEN .....	174
--	-----

Survey of the Nature of Music .....	174
-------------------------------------	-----

Melody in its Differing Relation to Greek Art and Christianity .....	176
--	-----

Catholicism and Folk-Song .....	177
---------------------------------	-----

Music's Exceptional Course of Development .....	177
---	-----

Beethoven's Ideal of Melody .....	178
-----------------------------------	-----

Folk-Melody in the Hands of Opera-Composers .....	179
---	-----

Beethoven's Aspiration as Leading to Seek the Poet's Aid .....	179
--	-----

The Rediscovery of Folk-Melody .....	180
--------------------------------------	-----

Contrast of Melodic Methods .....	182
-----------------------------------	-----

Beethoven's Methods of Melodic Treatment .....	183
--	-----

The Inner Organism of Absolute Music .....	184
--	-----

Beethoven's Melody an Evolution from Text .....	184
---	-----

---

THE FEMININE ORGANISM OF MUSIC .....	186
--------------------------------------	-----

Music's Feminine Affinity .....	186
---------------------------------	-----

Italian Opera .....	187
---------------------	-----

French Opera .....	188
--------------------	-----

German Opera .....	189
--------------------	-----

True Opera .....	191
------------------	-----

---

THE FRUCTIFYING AGENCY—THE POET .....	192.
---------------------------------------	------

---

## PART II.

THE STAGE-PLAY AND  
DRAMATICAL POETIC ART IN  
THE ABSTRACT.*(DAS SCHAUSPIEL UND DAS WESEN DER  
DRAMATISCHEN DICHTKUNST.)*

	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE .....	199
Epitome of Introduction .....	209
INTRODUCTION .....	211
(Relating to Art-Work and the Literary Drama)	
Lessing and his Laocoön .....	211
Effect of Lessing's Argument .....	212
Relative Vocation of Imagination and the Senses .....	213
Limitations of the Arts Separately .....	214
Union of Art-Varieties .....	214
Music in Relation to the Literary Drama .....	215
Course of Progress: Voice to Clavier .....	216
Clavier Prevalence Explained .....	217
Clavier and Modern Art: An Analogy .....	218

---

Epitome of Chapter I .....	221
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER I.

## MODERN DRAMA.

(a) THE TWOFOLD ORIGIN OF THE DRAMA .....	224
Greek Drama and Romance .....	224
(b) ROMANCE AND SHAKESPEARE .....	225
The Renaissance .....	225
Mediæval Attempts to Express the Inner Nature .....	226

# CONTENTS.

xix

	PAGE
The Art of Ariosto .....	227
The Progress from Romance to Drama .....	228
The Shakespeare Drama .....	229
Traits of the Mediæval Play .....	230
Influence upon Art-Work of Engagement of the Senses .....	231
Representation of the Scene .....	232
The One Shortcoming of the Shakespeare Drama .....	233
(c) THE GREEK DRAMA AND RACINE .....	235
The Germanic and Romanic Elements in Art-Pro- gress .....	235
Romanic Tendencies Described .....	236
Opposite Dramatic Models .....	237
Influences of Unity of Scene .....	238
The Racine Tragedy and Early Opera .....	239
(d) THE MODERN LITERATURE-DRAMA .....	240
Origin of the Modern Drama .....	240
Origin of Opera .....	241
Various Effects of Superabundance of Dramatic Material .....	242
Shakespeare's Compression of Material .....	244
Shakespeare and Change of Scene .....	245
Modern Treatment of the Shakespeare Play .....	246
Unsettled Condition of the Modern Poet .....	247
(e) GOETHE, SCHILLER AND THEIR SUCCESSORS .....	248
The Experience of Goethe with "Götz von Ber- lichingen" .....	248
Goethe and "Faust" .....	250
Goethe and Greek Tragedy-Form .....	251
Goethe's Later Experiences .....	252
Schiller's Use of Historic Material .....	254
Schiller and Shakespeare Compared .....	255
Schiller and "Wallenstein" .....	257
Schiller's Treatment of Greek Tragedy-Form and Later Experiences .....	258
The Lessons of Schiller's Experiences .....	260
Phases of Literary Art-Production .....	262
Contradictory Features of the Literary Lyric .....	263
Fallacy of the New Departure .....	264

	PAGE
Epitome of Chapter II .....	267

## CHAPTER II.

### MATERIAL OF THE MODERN LITERATURE- DRAMA.

(a) THE GREEK LEGEND AND TRAGEDY .....	271
The Vocation of Fantasy in Art .....	271
The Greek Legend as Dramatic Material .....	272
Effect of Fantasy upon View of Primary Cause ...	274
Art-Direction caused by the Human Impulse .....	275
Volk the Real Art-Creator .....	276
Realisation of the Real Contents of the Legend ...	276
Unity of the Tragic-Poet's Art-Work .....	278
(b) THE CHRISTIAN LEGEND AND TRAGEDY .....	279
Origin of the Mediæval Romance .....	279
The Individual Man .....	280
Point of Departure of the Christian Legend .....	281
Death and the Christian Legend .....	282
Greek and Christian Artistic Views of Life .....	284
Course of Greek and Christian Drama Compared .....	285
(c) THE GERMAN LEGEND AND KNIGHTLY ROMANCE .....	286
Insight into the Legend's Development .....	286
Christianity and the German Legend .....	287
Dispersive Effects of Christianity upon the Legend .....	289
The Christian Knightly Romance .....	290
Further Influence upon the Legend of the Christian View of Life .....	291
The Modern Expansion of Life-Survey .....	292
(d) HISTORY AND SHAKESPEARE .....	294
The Position of Christianity in Respect of Art ...	294
The Position of Christianity as towards the State .....	295
The Position of both Church and State as towards the Individual .....	296
The Position of the Individual as towards the Realities of Life .....	297
(e) MODERN MAN AND THE DESCRIPTIVE ROMANCE .....	298
The Position of the Individual towards Society ...	298
Search for the Purely-Human .....	300

# CONTENTS.

xxi

PAGE

Respective Methods of the Investigator and Dramatic Poet .....	301
Relative Methods of the Romance-Writer and Dramatic Poet .....	302
Detail of Procedure in Drama and Romance .....	303
The Special Procedure in Romance .....	305
Abuses in Treatment of the Romance .....	306
History and the Social Nature of Man .....	308
The Modern State and Middle-Class Life .....	309
Middle-Class Society from the Art Standpoint ...	310
Later Phase of the Romance .....	312
(f) POLITICS AND JOURNALISM .....	313
" Fate " in the Modern World .....	313

---

Epitome of Chapter III .....	315
------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER III.

### FORM OF THE MODERN LITERARY DRAMA.

(a) STATE AND INDIVIDUAL .....	317
Nature as compared with Custom .....	317
The Natural Impulse—in Relation to the Opinions of Society .....	318
(b) THE LEGEND OF ŒDIPUS—AS EXPLANATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN STATE AND INDIVIDUAL .....	319
The Crime of Œdipus .....	319
Society and the Family .....	321
Nature's Attitude towards Social Morality .....	322
Œdipus and the Sphinx .....	323
The Decree of Creon .....	325
The Perjury of Eteocles .....	326
The Struggle of Polynices .....	327
The Separate Constitution of Religion and State .....	328
State-Morality .....	329
State Sacrifice to Custom .....	331
The Love of Antigone .....	332
The Vindication of Antigone .....	334
The Despair of Hæmon .....	335

	PAGE
(c) REFLECTION UPON THE REVIVAL OF "ANTIGONE" AT POTSDAM .....	335
The "Antigone" of Sophocles .....	335
(d) THE STATE DENIES FREE HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY .....	336
Truth and Richness of the Œdipus Legend .....	336
The Œdipus Legend and the State .....	337
The State—Abstract and Concrete .....	338
The State's Remedy for Social Defects .....	339
Vocation of the Individual in the Modern State ...	340
The Individual's Free Disposition of Self .....	340

---

Epitome of Chapter IV .....	343
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IV.

### INTELLECT AND FEELING.

(a) MODERN DRAMA REPRESENTS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL .....	346
The State and Individual in Art .....	346
The Individual's State-Surrounding .....	347
State-Control of Individuality .....	348
Free-Individuality an Ideal .....	349
The Artistic Procedure in Regard to Intellect and Feeling .....	350
The Direct Appeal to Feeling .....	351
Influence of Custom upon Artistic Methods .....	352
Appeal to Intellect induces Use of Word-Speech ...	354
The Course of Drama in the Future .....	355
(b) NECESSITY OF THE PARTICIPATION OF FEELING .....	355
The True Human Consciousness .....	356
Impediments to Individual Development .....	357
The Survival of all Obstacle by Individuality .....	358
Individuality in Youth and Age .....	359
Love—the True Mainspring of Individuality .....	360
The Twofold Application of Experience .....	360
Insufficiency of State-imposed Experience .....	361
The Mutual Relations of Youth and Old Age .....	362
Co-operation of Experience with Zeal .....	363
The Intellectual Factor in Artistic Work .....	363

	PAGE
The Relation between Intellect and Feeling in Artistic Work .....	364
(c) GREATER NECESSITY OF FEELING IN DRAMATIC ART-WORK .....	365
Position of the Drama with Regard to Feeling ...	365
Vocation of the Emotional in Drama .....	366
Choice of Dramatic Subject .....	367
Contrast of the Intellectual and Emotional .....	368
Varieties of Action .....	369
Mode of Presenting Action Artistically .....	370
Further Stage in the Presentation of Action .....	371
Action's Compression into the Marvellous .....	371

Epitome of Chapter V .....	373
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER V.

### MATERIAL OF THE DRAMATIC ART-WORK.

(a) THE MARVELLOUS .....	375
The Superhuman in Religion .....	375
Artistic and Dogmatic Wonder .....	376
Compression as compared with Curtailment .....	377
Portrayal of the Motive .....	378
Correspondence in Strength of Motive and Situation .....	379
Utility of the Compressed Survey .....	379
Correspondence of Strength of Character and Extent of Mutual Relations .....	380
(b) THE RELATION OF MAN TO NATURE .....	381
Degrees in Application of the Marvellous to Artistic Purposes .....	381
Artistic Influence of Truer Conceptions of Nature .....	382
The Poet's Conception of the Enjoyment of Nature .....	383
The Individualisation of Nature .....	384
The Relation of Man to Nature .....	385
Man's Communion with Nature .....	386
(c) THE NEW-FOUND LEGEND OF PURE EXPRESSION .....	387
The Drama as Nature's Exponent .....	387
Retrospect of Dramatic Procedure .....	388



	PAGE
Epitome of Dramatic Procedure .....	389
The Poet's Position in Regard to Procedure .....	390
Concentration of Dramatic Interest .....	390
The Intellectual in Dramatic Procedure .....	391
The Realisation of Dramatic Conception .....	391

---

Epitome of Chapter VI .....	393
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VI.

## FORM OF DRAMATIC ART-WORK.

## THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PURELY-HUMAN.

(a) THE SPEECH AND INTELLECT .....	396
The Relation to Drama of the Lyric Element .....	396
(b) THE TONAL LANGUAGE AND ARTICULATE SPEECH .....	397
The Vowel-Utterance as Basis .....	397
Gesture and Rhythm .....	398
The Formation of Roots of Speech .....	400
The Poetic Impulse of Speech .....	401
(c) ALLITERATION .....	401
Relation to Melody of Initial Rhyme .....	403
The Conditions of Metre .....	404
(d) TERMINAL RHYME AND CONVERSATIONAL SPEECH ...	405
Articulate Speech as Offspring of Intonation and	
Gesture .....	405
The Application of Roots of Speech .....	406
The Progress of Terminal Rhyme .....	407
Articulate Speech as Intellectual Medium .....	408
Restricted Expression of Feeling in Articulate	
Speech .....	409
(e) THE TONAL LANGUAGE, OR THE LANGUAGE OF FEELING	410
Need for a Condensing Medium .....	410
Tonal Language the Condensing Medium .....	411
Misapplication of the Tonal Language in Modern	
Opera .....	412
The Correct Application of Tonal Language .....	412
Details of Procedure in Application of the Tonal	
Language .....	413

# CONTENTS.

XXV

	PAGE
(f) THE UNION OF INTELLECT AND FEELING .....	415
Tonal Language : a Necessary Ally of the Under- standing .....	415
Effect upon the Understanding of its Alliance with Tonal Language .....	416
The Womanly Relation of the Tonal Language to Dramatic Art .....	417

END OF CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

## PART III.

POETRY AND MUSIC IN THE  
DRAMA OF THE FUTURE.*(DICHTKUNST UND TONKUNST IM DRAMA DER  
ZUKUNFT.)*

	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE .....	v

Epitome of Chapter I .....	419
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER I.

## METRE MELODY AND TERMINAL RHYME.

METRE .....	422
First Stages of Modern Poetical Development .....	422
Gesture and Prosodical Measure .....	423
Features attending the Imitation of Classic Metre ...	424
Unfitness of Modern Speech for Rhythmic Precision ...	426
Influence of Music upon the Iambic Measure .....	428
The Iambic Measure in the Hands of Poet and Actor ...	429
<hr/>	
TERMINAL RHYME .....	430
The Early Stage of Terminal Rhyme .....	430
Relations of Terminal Rhyme and Modern Speech .....	432
General Effects of Rhyme .....	434
The Art of Poetic Production .....	435
Present Poetical Conditions .....	436
<hr/>	
MELODY .....	438
The Association of Melody with Terminal Rhyme .....	438
Relations of Melody and Verse .....	439
The Accent of Living Speech .....	440
Divergence of Melodic from Speech Accent .....	442
Varying Qualities of Melody and Verse—as shown in Combination .....	444
Melody as Separated from Verse .....	445

Epitome of Chapter II .....	447
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER II.

EXPRESSION—AS EXEMPLIFIED IN ACCENT,  
ROOTS OF SPEECH AND INITIAL RHYME.

THE HIGHER SPEECH-EXPRESSION .....	451
Divergence between Modern Speech and Natural Speech Utterance .....	451
Evolution of Modern Speech .....	452
The Poet's Treatment of Ordinary Speech .....	453
Insufficiency of Speech-Expression .....	455
Influence of Feeling upon Speech-Expression .....	456
The Poet's Treatment of Speech Essentials .....	458

---

ACCENT .....	459
Regulation of Speech Accent .....	459
Regulation of Accentual Force .....	460
Relation of Speech to Musical Accent .....	462
Characteristic of Modern Verse .....	464
The Musical Bar .....	465
The Phrase and its Rhythm .....	466
Rhythm as a Means for the Elevation of Speech .....	467

---

ROOTS OF SPEECH .....	468
The Case of the Root-Syllable .....	469
The Present State of our Speech .....	470
The Vocation of the Root Syllable .....	472
Conditions of the Sounding-Vowel's Utterance .....	473

---

VOCATION OF THE CONSONANT IN INITIAL RHYME .....	474
The Case of the Consonant .....	474
Analysis of Speech Comprehension .....	476
Unity in Expression .....	477
The Poet and the Sense of Hearing .....	479

---

THE SOUNDING-VOWEL OF SPEECH AND ITS RISE TO MUSICAL TONE .....	482
--	-----

	PAGE
The Consonantal Double Function .....	482
The Case of the Sounding-Vowel .....	484
The Rise of Speech to Tonal Expression ....	486
Treatment of the Vowel-Sound .....	487
The Return of the Sounding-Vowel .....	489

---

Epitome of Chapter III .....	493
------------------------------	-----

### CHAPTER III.

#### WORD AND TONE-POET, AS BROUGHT TOGETHER BY THE LYRIC ELEMENT.

RELATIVE POSITIONS OF WORD AND TONE-POET .....	496
The Separated Effort of Poet and Musician .....	496
The Union of Music and Poetry .....	498

---

FIRST STAGES IN ART PROCEDURE .....	499
Musical and Literary Means Compared .....	499
The Musician's Approach to the Art-Work .....	501

---

THE LYRIC ELEMENT IN SPEECH .....	503
Speech and Primitive Melody .....	503
The Lesson of Greek Verse .....	505
The Return to Feeling .....	507

---

NATURAL MELODY IN ITS NECESSARY UNION WITH HAR- MONY .....	508
Rise of Melody to the Harmonic Surface .....	509
The True Union of Melody and Harmony .....	510

---

THE INCENTIVE TO MODULATE AND THE RELATION OF MODULATION TO INITIAL RHYME .....	511
The Case of Modulation .....	511
The Rise and Abuse of Modulation .....	513
Return to "Patriarchal Melody" .....	515
Contrast of Old and New Melody .....	516

# CONTENTS.

xxix

	PAGE
The Case of Modulation Advanced .....	518
Modulation as Exponent of Initial Rhyme .....	520
Modulation as a Musical Force .....	522
Effect of Modulative Wealth .....	524

---

Epitome of Chapter IV .....	527
-----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ORCHESTRA IN ILLUSTRATION OF THE POET'S INTENTION.

THE MUTUAL RELATIONS OF MELODY AND HARMONY .....	530
The Case of Melody and Harmony .....	530
The Tonal-Product of Melody and Harmony .....	531
Modes of Harmonic Treatment .....	534
Melody's Harmonic Conditions .....	536

---

THE MUTUAL RELATIONS OF POET AND MUSICIAN .....	537
Mutual Compensations by Poet and Musician .....	537
The Poet's Problem Solved by the Orchestra .....	539

---

POLYPHONY; AND THE ASSERTION OF INDIVIDUALITY ...	541
Individuality and Human Progress .....	541
The Case of Individuality .....	543
Individuality and its Surroundings .....	545
The Musician's Problem Solved by the Orchestra .....	546

---

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE ORCHESTRA	548
Orchestral Harmony Vertical and Horizontal .....	548
Orchestral Consonantal Utterance .....	550
The Orchestral and Vocal Elements .....	552
The Combination of Elements .....	553

---

THE ORCHESTRA'S POSITION IN OPERA .....	554
Voice as Instrument in "Absolute" Melody .....	555
Opera under "Absolute" Musical Conditions .....	557

	PAGE
VERSE MELODY AND THE ORCHESTRA .....	558
The Artistic Equilibrium of Voice and Orchestra .....	559
The Vocal Problem Solved by the Orchestra .....	561

---

Epitome of Chapter V .....	563
----------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MUTUAL VOCATION OF GESTURE AND THE ORCHESTRA.

GESTURE AS RELATED TO ORCHESTRAL SPEECH .....	566
The Orchestral Consonant and the "Unutterable" ...	567
Gesture's Equilibrium in Tonal Sound .....	568
Special Speech of Gesture and Orchestra Combined ...	570
The Cultivation of Gesture .....	572
Various Relations of Gesture to the Art-Work .....	574
The Ear's Longing Excited by Gesture .....	576

---

THE ORCHESTRA'S MIDDLE POSITION BETWEEN GESTURE AND VERSE-MELODY .....	577
Gesture Combined with Word-Verse and Orchestral Speech .....	578

---

MUSICAL THOUGHT AND MOTIVE .....	581
Thought as a Conception of the "Un-present" .....	581
The "Un-present" and the Present .....	583
Emotional and "Absolute" Musical Thought .....	585
The Case of the Motive .....	587

---

THE USE AND TREATMENT OF THE WARNING SENSATION	588
The "Warning" Sensation and its Expression .....	588
The Case of "Tone-Painting" .....	591
Various Relations of Presentiment .....	593
Treatment and Use of the "Warning" Sensation .....	594

---

	PAGE
Epitome of Chapter VI .....	597

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE UNITY OF DRAMATIC FORM.

THE COLLECTION OF POETICAL MEANS .....	600
The Orchestral Bond of Poetical Means .....	601

---

TONE-SPEECH AS THE UNITING INFLUENCE .....	602
Nature's Process of "Gradually Becoming" .....	602
Nature's Process as Applied to Art-Work .....	604
First Stage of the Art-Work .....	606
First Development of the Art-Work .....	608
The Treatment of Elevated Expression .....	610

---

THE ORCHESTRA AND DRAMATIC UNITY .....	610
The One Dramatic Form .....	611
The Unified Form in Comparison with Others .....	612
The Art of Unified Emotional Expression .....	614
Absolute Music opposed to Unity of Expression .....	616
The Orchestra and Unity of Feeling .....	617

---

COMPONENTS OF DRAMATIC FORM .....	618
Contrast of Conventional with Unified Drama .....	619
The Ideal Form .....	621

---

THE SOLUTION OF OPERA PROBLEMS .....	622
Unity of Expression the One Problem .....	622

---

Epitome of Chapter VII .....	625
------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

## DRAMA PRESENT AND FUTURE.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS .....	629
The New Consciousness .....	629



	PAGE
THE RELATIONS OF POET AND MUSICIAN .....	630
Is the Artist Restricted? .....	630
How Restrictions Apply .....	632
True Position of Poet and Musician .....	634
<hr/>	
THE RESPECTIVE TASKS OF POET AND MUSICIAN .....	635
Association of Poet and Musician .....	636
<hr/>	
THE BEST OPERA-LANGUAGE UNDER PRESENT SPEECH- CONDITIONS .....	639
The Opera-Language Question .....	639
<hr/>	
PREVAILING OPERA-CONDITIONS .....	641
Translations as they are .....	642
The Temptations of Recitative .....	644
The Trials of the Mother-Tongue .....	646
Fate of the Verse-Melody .....	648
Gesture and the Hearing-Sense .....	649
Gesture as now in Evidence .....	651
The Composer's Object Annulled .....	653
Orchestral Significance Destroyed .....	655
<hr/>	
DISCOURAGING OUTLOOK FOR THE POETICAL MUSICIAN ...	657
The Residue of Opera .....	658
The Humiliation of Art .....	660
<hr/>	
THE PHILISTINE INFLUENCE .....	661
Our Art Anticipatory .....	661
A Glance at the Past .....	663
<hr/>	
THE ARTISTIC OUTLOOK .....	665
Faith and Brotherhood .....	666
<hr/>	
EPITOME OF THE SITUATION .....	667
What is in Store .....	667
<hr/>	
ANALYTICAL INDEX .....	671

---

OPERA AND THE ESSENCE OF MUSIC.

---



# OPERA AND THE ESSENCE OF MUSIC

BEING PART I OF  
OPERA AND DRAMA

BY  
RICHARD WAGNER



## ORIGINAL PREFACE.

### EPITOME.

(1) Suggestions of reform more productive of ill-will than exposition of error. (2) Reluctance to act upon new convictions. (3) Present inquiry more precise than that of "Art Work of the Future." (4) Exposure to charge of envy for attack on Meyerbeer. (5) Real motive of the attack. (6) Open attack the only serviceable form of opposition to error. (7) Danger of yielding to motives of personal respect. (8) Claim of earnest purpose and lack of severity in method. (9) Attack confined to essentials, and admission of own previous error. (10) Independence of this inquiry. (11) Danger of half-heartedness. (12) Importance of the inquiry and conditions for its comprehension.



## ORIGINAL PREFACE.

1. I HAVE been informed by a friend that, by previous declarations of my views about art, I aroused far less general ill-feeling by applying myself to the discovery of reasons for the unfruitfulness of our present-day activity in art, than by my attempt to forecast the conditions necessary for its future productiveness.

2. Nothing can better characterise our condition than this practical observation. We all feel so thoroughly that we are not doing right, that we do not even raise any dispute when the case is clearly pointed out to us. But, when an attempt is made to show us how to set about actually doing right, and that this right thing, far from by any means presenting a sort of human impossibility, is not only very possible, but destined to become even necessary in the future, we feel hurt; because the admission of such a possibility removes all ground for excuse, should we persist in remaining under conditions of unfruitfulness. We are brought up with a sufficient feeling of honour to cause us to desire to avoid the appearance of cowardice and idleness. But, for all that, we are deficient in the natural incentive of honour towards bravery and action.



3. I shall be obliged, again, in these present writings, to evoke the same ill-will; and, in point of fact, so much the more, as, in course of them, I shall strive (and this not merely in a general way, as was the case in my "Art-work of the Future") to penetrate with even greater precision of inquiry into the details necessary to establish the possibility and necessity of a more beneficial activity in Art, within the regions of poetry and music.

4. I am almost inclined, however, to fear that, on this occasion, another form of ill-will will preponderate; that, namely, which I cause by my exposition of the unworthiness of modern opera-conditions. Many who are quite friendly to me will feel unable to understand how, with regard to myself, I should venture to attack a celebrated personage of our present-day circle of opera-composers so unsparingly; and to do so in that very capacity of opera-composer in which I am myself placed, and whereby I am obliged to pave the way for reproaches of an invincible envy.

5. I do not deny that I argued long with myself before I could resolve to do what I did; and to do it as I did. The whole contents of this attack have been thoroughly weighed by me, with a view to decide whether I ought to give it over to publicity in this form. Every turn in the expression of what was to be said, and each term employed, has been peacefully read again after completion; until I am, at last, convinced that, considering the extreme precision of my view of the weighty matter in question, I should have shown myself but cowardly and unworthy, had I refrained from expressing myself

about that renowned personage of the modern opera-composer's world in any other terms than precisely as I have done.

6. What I now say thereupon is no matter of doubt amongst the majority of honourable artists. It is not, however, a smothered discontent, but an openly declared and thoroughly explained opposition which is fruitful; because it brings about the requisite tempest in due course which purifies the elements, separates the clear from the unclear, and sifts whatever may require sifting. My intention, however, was not to raise this opposition for its own sake; but because I was compelled to do so, on account of still feeling the necessity, after the views which I have already expressed only in a general sense, of making them known with precision and certainty by application to particulars; so important is it to me, not only to excite others, but also to make myself thoroughly understood by them.

7. In order to ensure becoming thus plainly understood I was obliged to point the finger at the most remarkable manifestations of our art; but I could not withdraw that finger, and, closing my fist, thrust it into my pocket as soon as precisely that manifestation presented itself in which an error of art, very necessary for solution, most unmistakably appeared; and which, the more dazzling the form in which it accrues, the more extensively deceives the eye; the case being one requiring the latter to see quite clearly, in order to avoid being altogether blinded. Had I remained under the influence of regard for this one personage, this work, to which my convictions impelled me, either could

not have been undertaken at all; or, I should have had to cripple its force by knowingly concealing what was not only most in view, but the most necessary to be precisely viewed:

8. Whatever judgment may be passed upon my work, therefore, every one (including the most hostile reader) must admit one thing; and that is—the earnestness of my intention. Whoever is reached by this earnestness, as a result of the comprehensive-ness of my exposition, will not only excuse me for this attack, but also realise that I have not frivolously undertaken it; and least of all from any motives of envy. It will also justify me for having, in my description of what is disagreeable in our art-manifestations, occasionally alternated seriousness with the play of irony; which alone can render the repugnant tolerable to our sight, whilst, on the other hand, it is always that which wounds the least.

9. Even of this artistic personage I had, however, only to attack one side; that, namely, which is turned towards our public concerns of art. It was only by taking that aspect of this personality exclusively into view that I was able to confine my regard to it, as was here necessary, to the entire suppression of all matters in respect of which relations exist which formerly were the occasions of some contact with myself. These, however, are so far removed from the publicity of art matters that they can scarcely be introduced into the question. Yet I am almost constrained so to admit them, in order to acknowledge that I was once in error myself—a confession, however, which is made

willingly and unreservedly, now that I am convinced of my previous mistake.

10. When once able by this means to put myself right with my own conscience, I had considerably less need to trouble about the suggestions of prudence; for I cannot fail to be quite clear upon the point that it was from the time that I struck out the very path in my artistic works which I am now representing as a writer that I became exiled from our public art-world, both politically and artistically, and thus subjected to a condition from which it is quite impossible for me to be individually released.

11. But quite a different kind of reproach might be addressed to me, by those who hold the object of my attack to have had its worthlessness already too exposed to repay the trouble of a circumstantial attack. Those who judge in this way are, however, altogether in the wrong. What they know is known only to a few; and what the majority of those few know they would rather not know. The greatest danger is from half-heartedness; which is everywhere observable, and which obstructs every action and every judgment concerning art. I was obliged, however, to speak up vigorously and unmistakably with respect to this aspect of the case; being not so much concerned with the attack as with the evidence of artistic possibilities lying beyond it; and which can only show themselves clearly when we stand upon ground from which half-heartedness has been completely swept away.

12. But, whoever regards the art-manifestation which now rules the public taste as something merely

accidental or unimportant is fundamentally affected by the very same error as that from which the manifestation in question proceeds; and to show this precisely was the next object of the present work—the broader aim of which is entirely beyond the conception of those who have not previously and completely cleared their minds respecting the character of the same error.

The hope of being understood in the desired sense I place only in those who are possessed of the courage to renounce all prejudices.

May the fulfilment of this hope be realised for me by many!

ZÜRICH, *January, 1851.*

## DEDICATION OF SECOND EDITION.

### EPITOME.

(13) Sudden exhaustion of first edition. (14) Slightness of the interest caused by first and second parts. (15) The "Music of the Future" interest of third part. (16) Political and religious allusions of second part cause sudden demand. (17) Disappointing result of entire first edition. (18) Sympathy between Wagner and Constantin Frantz. (19) Sacrifice caused by their opinions in the case of Frantz. (20) Wagner's view of his own success. (21) The origin and literary style of "Opera and Drama." (22) Futility of the treatment of its subject by mere theorists and æsthetes. (23) The work instructive only to the sincere. (24) The kind of success desired by Wagner.



-  
DEDICATION  
OF THE  
SECOND EDITION OF "OPERA AND  
DRAMA" .

TO CONSTANTIN FRANTZ.

13. ABOUT the same time last year that a letter from you informed me so delightfully of the impressions you had derived from perusal of this book of mine I heard that the first edition had been already sold out. As only a short time had elapsed since my having been informed that a tolerably good supply of copies remained on hand, I was astonished at this, and naturally sought to know the reasons for this increase of interest; which had manifestly set in during the last few years, and was in favour of a literary work prevented by its very nature from being intended for any special public.

14. My previous experiences of this subject had shown me that the first part, which was a criticism of opera as a branch of art, had been merely looked through by musical journalistic reviewers and that a few humorous observations found therein had attracted attention. I also learned that the contents



of the same part had been earnestly weighed by some real musicians and that even the constructive third part had been read.

Of any practical attention to the second part—that devoted to the drama and dramatic material—I could perceive no token, and ostensibly my book had only found its way into the hands of musicians by profession, remaining quite unknown to literary poets.

15. The title of the third part—"Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future"—furnished that of "Music of the Future," by way of indicating a new tendency of music; as the founder of which I have become widely celebrated, though in the most unforeseen manner.

16. It turned out to be the second part of my book—that part which had hitherto remained totally unheeded—that I have to thank for this otherwise unexplainable increase in the demand for the work, whereby the necessity is created for a second edition. The fact is that there arose amongst people to whom I was equally indifferent, whether as poet or musician, an interest, consequent upon the many strange things which have been said about my writings, to hunt up certain spiteful things which I was supposed to have said about politics and religion. I cannot say how far such people succeeded in persuading themselves that dangerous tendencies might properly be ascribed to me. But the event proved that they were able to induce me to attempt to show what I had understood by the said "Downfall of the State," and I admit that the matter caused me some embarrassment; so that,

in order to escape with comfort, I gladly lent myself to the view that I had had no very evil design; and that, after thinking the matter over, I had really nothing weighty to urge against the State going on as usual.

17. The net outcome of the publication of this remarkable book, as far as my experience has gone, has been to show it to have been entirely useless; and to have attracted nothing but worries to myself, without, on the other hand, conveying salutary instructions to anybody whatever. My inclination was to forget all about it; besides which I looked with disfavour on a new edition, if only for the reason that it would compel me to read it through again; against which, ever since its first appearance, I had experienced a great objection. But your expressive letter has disposed me completely to change all that.

18. It was not by accident that my music-dramas attracted you, whilst I was becoming full of your political writings. Who can gauge the extent of my joyful astonishment when you appealed to me with such full intelligence from that central point of my troublesome book—that very point which has been so sadly misunderstood—"Your downfall of the State is the establishment of my German Empire"! Seldom has there been such a genuine case of mutual completion, as here of itself came about upon the broadest and most comprehensive foundation between the politician and the artist. Well may we now take fresh courage in believing in that German spirit which has led us to such a deeply felt recognition of the great destination of

our people, though proceeding from the most opposite points of view.

19. The strengthening of this belief by means of our meeting was necessary, however. What was eccentric in my opinions, as stated in this present work, was caused entirely by the despair which presented the only alternative. The grounds of resistance to all such doubt would even yet appear deficient in power were we to seek them only in our public manifestations. All familiarity with the latter can only bring ungrateful relations to those who hold to our faith; whilst entire separation, in spite of the sacrifices it entails, alone affords relief. This kind of sacrifice in your case took the form of renouncing the universal esteem and respect due to your noble political writings; in which, with convincing clearness, you point out to Germans the salvation which lies so near to them.

20. The sacrifice seemed less which the artist had to bring; the dramatic poet and musician whose works were speaking to you in full publicity from all theatres, thus strengthening your hope to such degree that already you saw an all-powerful nourishment applied to our belief. It was difficult for you to avoid misunderstanding me, and not to deem my refusal to accede to your confident assumptions an unhealthy exaggeration, as I endeavoured to instruct you respecting the poor result of my successes with the German theatre-going public. You acquired this instruction, however, at last for yourself—gathering the fundamental lesson from precise knowledge of this work on “Opera and Drama”—now dedicated to you.

Certainly it exposed to you those wounds, hidden from all the world, from which, in view of a security of perception entirely beyond reach of deceit, my successes as a German opera-composer naturally suffer. In fact, and even to the present time, nothing is able to set me completely at rest as to whether the all-important element in these successes is not grounded upon a misconception; to the complete obstruction of the only real success, and that which was in view.

21. I exposed particulars of this apparent contradiction to the public some eighteen years ago in the shape of a thorough treatment of the problem of "Opera and Drama." What I most admire in those who devote a thoroughly close attention to that exposition is that they do not yield to the fatigue caused by the explanation; the difficulty of which was forced upon me by the searching character of the treatment. My desire to go right to the depth of the subject imparted a hardness to my style, which the reader only in search of amusement and not profoundly interested in the subject might easily mistake for incoherence. In the present revision of the text, however, I came to the resolve of altering nothing material, as I could recognise that the very difficulty of the book which is now in question presented, on the other hand, the quality which best recommended it to the earnest inquirer. Even an apology for that I am obliged to deem superfluous and deceptive.

22. The problems of which I was constrained to undertake the treatment, independently of never having been handled in the connection which I

attribute to them, have never been undertaken by the kind of artist whose sentiments they most particularly concern. On the contrary, it has been the theorist and æstheticist who have taken them in hand; and who, with all goodwill, could not avoid the disadvantage of having to use a dialectic style of explanation for subjects, the inherent qualities of which placed them as far beyond the range of philosophic disquisition as music is itself. The lack of depth and of adequate knowledge are easily concealed, and the discussion of things which are not understood rendered possible by a profuse indulgence in dialectic terms of expression; and this in such a way as to present an imposing spectacle to those who are equally uninformed.

23. But he who has no desire to disport with philosophic ideas before people who have none such, but who attaches importance, in respect of difficult problems, to getting rid of false ideas, and to acquiring a correct conception of the matter in hand—he it is who may learn from this book how much is to be done in order to bring his project to a state giving him inward satisfaction.

24. I venture therefore to present my book anew for earnest attention in this sense; and, when this is forthcoming, it will serve (as it has already done in your own case, my honoured friend) to put an end to the frightful gap which exists between the mistaken spirit of the success of my music-dramas and that effect which floats ever before my mental vision as alone to be pronounced correct.

## INTRODUCTION.

### EPITOME.

(25) Obstinate life of error. (26) Application of this to the case of opera. (27) Low grade of public taste the natural outcome of events. (28) Shortcomings of criticism in respect of opera. (29) The critic's lack of artistic impetus. (30) The duties of criticism defined. (31) Indeterminate attitude of actual criticism. (32) The selfish ends of criticism. (33) Present affairs demand that musicians should themselves take criticism in hand. (34) The great error as regards opera, as exemplified by an article in the "Gegenwart." (35) The critic's failure to act upon his own convictions. (36) Mendelssohn and opera. (37) What the critic really wants in opera but does not express. (38) The critic's illogical mode of procedure in operatic matters. (39) The real solution of the opera-question. (40) The real difficulty. (41) Prevalence of self-deceit upon the question. (42) The frame of mind requisite for acquirement of correct views. (43) Concise statement of the great error. (44) Absolute certainty of the fact as stated. (45) How opera began. (46) The dramatic cantata. (47) The poet's subordinate position from Metastasio to the present time. (48) The object of opera. (49) Text a mere musical means. (50) The drama and absolute music. (51) The scheme of the first part of the work.



## INTRODUCTION.

25. No manifestation, according to its nature, can be fully understood any sooner than it becomes a reality. No error can be abolished any sooner than the means of sustaining it run out; or until all ways within the range created by this sustenance and for the satisfaction of the necessary want, have been both estimated and tested.

26. Our actual opera cannot become clear to us as something unnatural and worthless without its unnatural and worthless qualities becoming most openly and disagreeably manifest; that error which underlies the development of this art-form cannot dawn upon our perceptions without noble geniuses spending all their artistic life-force in exploring every by-way of its labyrinth and never finding a way out, or anything else than a continual return to the error's point of departure; thus rendering the maze, at last, a refuge for the lunacy of the world.

27. The workings of the opera of the present day, in regard to publicity, have long formed an object of deep and violent dislike for artists of honour; but the latter confine themselves to blaming the perversion of public taste, and the frivolity of



those artists who exploit it. They have so far failed to alight upon the fact that this perversion was quite a natural outcome; as was, therefore, also the frivolity which attended it.

28. If critics were really what they imagine they are they would long since have found out the answer to this riddle about the error, and have radically accounted for all the frank artist's discontent. Instead of that, even they have merely felt an instinctive disgust; being just as much embarrassed by the solution as the artist himself. Thus, they have merely groped in search of explanation, and, within the workings of error, tried all they could to find a way out.

29. In all this the great evil suffered by criticism lies in its very nature. The critic does not feel impelled by any such necessity as that which makes the artist exclaim, at last, with inspired fortitude—*so is it, and not otherwise!*

30. Should the critic be disposed to imitate the artist in this he must necessarily commit himself by presumption. This means that he will confidently advance views of something with respect to which he lacks the artistic instinct; expressing, with purely æsthetical selection of ideas, opinions for the support of which he has to rely upon the standpoint of abstract learning. Should the critic really know his correct position towards the world of artistic manifestations he feels held back, alike by timidity and prudence; which cause him only to group these manifestations, and then to hand over these groups for further inquiry; but never to speak out the decisive word with enthusiastic clearness.

31. Criticism thus lives a life of gradual steps; in other words, it tends to the everlasting support of error. Its feeling amounts to a fear that, were error vanquished, the plain unvarnished truth would enter into possession; that truth which provides abundant occasion to rejoice, though none to criticise. This is the case of the lover over again; whose height of amorous emotion invariably prevents him from reflecting upon the nature of his passion, or upon that of its object. The absence of this complete domination of the art-feeling remains a deficiency of criticism; and must so remain, as long as it exists, or *can* exist. It can never enter fully into its subject, but must ever turn the better half of itself away—the very half, too, which is most essential to it.

32. Criticism lives on “yets” and “buts.” Should it probe the aforesaid manifestations to their depths it would be obliged to confine itself to certain proclamation of one thing only; that being—its experience of those depths. This assumes at least that the critic possesses the requisite capability emanating from love for the subject; but the one thing mentioned is of such a kind that, if given clear utterance, it must render future criticism next door to impossible. Criticism keeps a sharp look-out for its own sake, and, gliding over the surface of art-manifestations, it carefully measures out its action; when, should it become anxious—lo!—there stands the cowardly, unmanly word “however” in waiting, and ready to provide the possibility for endless uncertainty—as well as to gain the case for criticism once more.

33. Yet we are all obliged to take criticism in hand, for only by its means can the error of any tendency of art, as revealed by these manifestations, come to our complete knowledge; only by the knowledge of error can such fault be eradicated. If artists have unconsciously nourished this fault, finally raising it to a point of further impossibility, they must, in order thoroughly to conquer it, make a final manly effort to become critics themselves; by which means they annihilate the error and elevate criticism at the same time, in order then to resume, or rather really to begin their work as artists capable of abandoning themselves without fear to the impetus of their own inspiration, entirely unconcerned about æsthetic definitions of the project they may have in hand. The moment which imperatively demands this effort has arrived, and now we are ourselves compelled to do what must be done; that is, if we do not wish to go to ground as worthy only of contempt and ridicule.

34. What is this error, which every one of us has suspected, but which no one has really known?

My glance falls upon the work of a clever and experienced art-critic, consisting of a long article in Brockhaus's paper—the "Gegenwart"—and entitled "Modern Opera." The writer, in the most intelligent manner, groups together all the salient manifestations of modern opera, and quite clearly indicates thereby the whole history of this error and its revelation. He almost seems to point with his finger at the very fault, almost to reveal it to our very sight; and then seems to feel himself so incapable of stating its foundation with precision.

that, instead of that, he prefers, on arriving at the necessary moment for frankness, to lose himself in meandering descriptions of the manifestation itself; so that, in a certain way, he dulls the surface of the mirror which, up to that time, had gone on giving us more and more light.

35. This critic knows that opera has no historical (he ought to say natural) origin. He knows that it did not proceed from the people, but that it is the result of artistic selection. He quite correctly guesses at the injurious character of this arbitrary choice, when he describes the work of most of the living German and French opera composers as an egregious mistake, saying that they endeavour to get effects through musical characteristics, which alone are to be obtained by means of the clear signification which attaches to that of dramatic poetry. He arrives at the well-based reflection that opera is probably in itself but a self-contradicting and unnatural form of art; he demonstrates, almost unconsciously however in this case, that, in the works of Meyerbeer, this want of conformity to Nature is driven to its most unbecoming point; and then, instead of stating in so many words what is necessary and what is almost known by everybody, he suddenly tries to prolong the life of criticism by expressing regrets that Mendelssohn's early death should have prevented the solution of the riddle; which really means, not its prevention, but its postponement.

36. What does the critic mean by this regret? It can only be that he assumes Mendelssohn, with his fine intelligence and extraordinary musical

equipment, to have been either equal to the task of writing an opera in which the obvious contradictions of this art-form would have been triumphantly overcome and reconciled, or, else that, in spite of that intelligence and equipment, he would have been unequal to the task; in which case he would have borne witness to these contradictions once for all, and proved the unnatural and worthless character of this art-form.

37. Did the critic think he could make this question dependent upon the will of a specially gifted musical personage? Was Mozart less musically gifted? Is it possible to find anything more finished than each piece of his "Don Juan"? Even at best, what else could Mendelssohn have done than provide that which, number for number, would have equalled Mozart's music in its perfection? Or, does the critic want something different?—something beyond what Mozart provided?

In point of fact, that is just what he does want. He wants the grand unified edifice of the entire drama. He wants it, strictly speaking, in its highest fullness and power.

38. But of whom does he demand this? Of the musician! The net outcome of his intelligent review of opera manifestations, the tight knot into which he has concentrated all the threads of knowledge by his skilful manipulation he finally lets slip, throwing everything back again into its old state of confusion! He wants a house built, and applies to the sculptor, or upholsterer. It does not occur to him to think of the architect, the very man who not only provides the joint work of the sculptor

and upholsterer, but that of every other kind of necessary helper for the entire preparation of the house, with its special object and disposition. Quite unaided he has solved the problem; but, instead of the solution bringing him daylight, it has brought him only the workings of lightning in the darkness of night; after the flashes of which the pathway before him suddenly became more obscure than ever before. At last, he gropes round in the most complete darkness; and it is not until the error descends to such a degree of offence and indecency that it seems to invite a violent hand-grasp (as for example when we meet with it in the Meyerbeer opera) that this completely bewildered one suddenly thinks he recognises the way out. At every moment he stumbles and staggers over stock and stone; at every contact he experiences a tremor, and his breath forsakes him through the suffocating atmosphere which he is compelled to breathe. Yet he persists in thinking himself on the right road to salvation; for which reason he is at great pains to deceive himself about everything which blocks the road with anything like evil augury.

39. Yet, however unconsciously, he is advancing upon the road to salvation; which is, in truth, but that which leads away from error. It may be said to be even more; in the sense that it is the concluding portion of that road, at error's culminating point, and its declared annihilation. That annihilation here amounts to—"the avowed death of Opera"—a death sealed by Mendelssohn's good angel in the timely closing of its charge's eyes.

40. The answer to the problem lies straight

before us, the manifestations of it speak out clearly and unmistakably; and it is the fact that both critics and artists are still able to turn wilfully away from acknowledging this which constitutes the greatest grievance of our time.

41. We may be ever so honestly imbued by the desire to study art essentially, we may be ever so well guided for our contest against this lie; yet, we only deceive ourselves as to the essential in art, and we fight only with the impotence of this deceit once more against the same lie, from the moment that we remain persistently in the self-same error respecting the nature of the most productive art-form by which music makes itself known; that from which the present art-form sprang, and to which its obvious destruction and the demonstration of its nothingness is to be ascribed.

42. To me it seems as if you needed an immense courage and an exceptionally firm resolution for the acknowledgment and proclamation of that error, as if you felt that all need for your present art-production would disappear as soon as you had delivered that necessary pronouncement; and that, therefore, it is only with considerable self-sacrifice that you can spur yourselves up to the required pitch. Yet, it scarcely seems to me to require either power or painstaking, and certainly no courage or bravery, when the only question is one of acknowledging, without any resort to surprise or astonishment, what is obvious, what has long been felt, and what has now arrived at the stage of being past denial.

43. I am almost ashamed to raise my voice for utterance of the short formula which reveals this

error; and might well blush to announce it in the sense of being some novelty of weight; for it is something so clear, so simple, and in itself so certain, that, in my view, the whole world must have known it both long ago and well.

If, however, I now deliver this formula with full emphasis—if I explain that the above error in the operatic art-form consists in the fact:

That a means of expression (Music) has been made the object; and that the object of expression (Drama) has been made the means

this occurs by no means in any such dream as that of supposing I had discovered something new; but with the intention of presenting the hidden error in plainly seizable form, and of thus taking the field against the deplorable half-heartedness which nowadays is so spread amongst us both in art and criticism. Should we light up, with the torch placed into our hand by the truth which accompanies the discovery of this error, the manifestations of our operatic art and criticism, we should be obliged to experience the astonishment of finding in what a labyrinth of follies all our productions and judgments have hitherto been moving; and it will explain to us why every inspired endeavour has been not only obliged to make shipwreck on the cliffs of impossibility, but also why the most level heads have hopelessly wandered in their judgments.

44. Can it possibly be necessary to say anything in support of this open declaration of the prevailing error in operatic art-form? Is it open to doubt that, in opera, the music has really been taken as the



object; whilst the drama stood to it 'in the relation of means? Of course not. The merest cursory survey of the historical development of opera affords the most unmistakable instruction hereupon. Every writer who has occupied himself with the statement of this development has, by the mere force of narrating the facts, involuntarily revealed the truth.

45. It was not from the folk-play of the Middle Ages, in which are to be found traces of a natural co-operation between music and the drama, that opera originated, but at the luxurious courts of Italy; which, strange to say, is the only great European land of culture in which the drama never attained to any importance. It there occurred to some distinguished people who were tired of Palestrina's music to have "Arias" sung to them by the singers engaged at the festivals. These arias were folk-tunes, stripped of their natural truth and simplicity, to which they now gave a capricious textual setting, merely from the necessity of giving them the appearance of dramatic coherence.

46. This dramatic cantata, the material of which has anything but opera in view, is not only the mother of our opera; for it is our opera itself. The farther it advanced from this point of departure the more certainly the aria-form, as the only purely musical remnant, gave the opportunity for display of the singer's vocal execution; and the clearer became the task of the poet, who was merely called as a help, and whose duty it was to furnish the poetic form; not destined to serve for anything further than to administer to the singer's need, by giving the musical aria-form its necessary text.

47. Metastasio's great reputation was based upon the fact that he never gave the musician any trouble; that, from the dramatic standpoint, he never propounded any demand, but remained always the well-disciplined and most pliable servant of the musician. Has this relation of the poet to the composer altered up to this very day by so much as a hair's breadth? It has certainly changed in respect of what we now recognise on principle as "dramatic," and which, in any case, differs from the old Italian opera; but it has by no means changed as to all that concerns the characteristic element of the situation. This amounts at the present day, just as it did one hundred and fifty years ago, to the poet receiving his inspiration from the musician; to his waiting upon the music's whims; to his leaning to the musician's inclination; to his choosing his material according to the latter's taste and casting his characters, according to the voices, in the manner in which their employment is rendered necessary by purely musical combinations; besides providing a dramatic background for certain musical forms in which the musician may desire to disport more freely. It amounts, in short, therefore, to his subordinating the drama to the music, in the sense of constructing it only in accordance with the special musical intentions of the composer; the alternative being, in the event of his being unwilling or unable to do all this, that he must submit to be regarded as of no use in the capacity of librettist.

Is this true or not? I doubt the possibility of advancing one iota against this statement.

48. The object of opera has, therefore, always been music; and it remains so still.

49. With the sole purpose of providing music with the justification for some given extension the purposes of the drama are invoked; obviously not to impede the music, but to serve it in the capacity of means. This much is everywhere admitted without ado; nobody, in fact, seeking to deny the indicated relations of the drama to music, or those of the poet to the composer.

50. It is only in consequence of the opera's unusual spread, and of the capacity for effect which it displays, that people have imagined themselves obliged to get reconciled with the monstrous style of its presentment; and to give it credit for the possibility of furnishing something new, something not yet heard or even dreamed of, viz.:

Of building up the real drama on the basis of absolute music.

---

51. Having adopted it as the aim of this book to furnish proof that the co-operation of our music with poetic art not only can, but must, give to the drama a significance exceeding all previous conceptions, it follows that, in the accomplishment of this aim, I shall have to start off by a precise statement of the incredible error into which those have fallen who expect the drama's higher form ever to be attained through the medium of our modern

opera; or, in other words, through infringement of the natural conditions which govern the relations between poetry and music.

Let us, therefore, to begin with, apply ourselves exclusively to the question of the nature of opera.



# CHAPTER I.

## EPITOME.

(52) The development of music favoured by its unnatural position towards poetry. (53) The manner in which musical progress has resulted. (54) The frivolous and earnest courses of operatic development. (55) Influence of the singer in early opera. (56) Prominence of absolute song induces undue importance for the composer. (57) Eclipse of dramatic intention resulting from undue importance of singer and composer. (58) Primal interdependence of artistic elements in opera. (59) The poet's unnatural duty develops as a consequence of introduction of the ballet: (60) The poet's recourse to recitative as a connecting link. (61) Liturgical recitative as remodelled for use in opera. (62) The common theatrical stock set up by conventional acceptance of song, dance and recitative. (63) Gluck's opposition as composer to the tyranny of leading singers. (64) The alternative of treating the aria either sensuously or with some degree of dramatic purpose. (65) The triumph of Gluck's view in favour of the latter. (66) The altered relations of singer and composer. (67) No reform of the poet's position effected by Gluck. (68) Painful subservience of the poet to set musical forms under Gluck. (69) Broadening of operatic musical forms by Gluck's successors. (70) Disappearance of essential monody of the aria. (71) The dramatic ensemble. (72) The complete attainment of Gluck's special aims by Spontini and others. (73) Spontini's view of his own attainments. (74) Spontini's view of the romantic tendency. (75) The justification of Spontini for his apparently egotistical views. (76) Spontini the natural culmination of the operatic aspirations then prevailing. (77) The relations of poet and musician at this period defined. (78) Prevailing superiority of the musical element. (79) The poet's lot dependent upon the composer's success. (80) The composer justified by the circumstances in his feeling of self-satisfaction. (81) Impossibility of fulfilling dramatic possibilities within operatic musical forms of the period. (82) Necessarily commonplace character of libretti. (83) The opera dialect for poets. (84) Appearance of the composer as providing dramatic material. (85) Music an art of expression only. (86) The root of present error. (87-8) Sincerity of Spontini's aim.



# OPERA AND THE ESSENCE OF MUSIC.

## CHAPTER I.

### SERIOUS OPERA.

52. ALL things live and endure by virtue of a necessity for their existence, as well as by that of the requirements of their own nature. The **Music's Relation to Poetry.** very essence of the nature of music was to develop itself into the condition of becoming capable of various and precise expression; though this need, in spite of its natural character, would never have been satisfied, but for the fact that music was obliged to take up such a position towards poetry as not only to necessitate extreme demands upon its capabilities, but also to create requirements sometimes unavoidably infringing upon the impossible.

53. Only through form can an existence become manifest; and it was to the forms of song and dance that music was indebted for its first presentment. To the ordinary poet, **Evolution of Musical Means.** whose only desire in using music for the drama was to intensify the expression at his command, the art, thus restricted, could not possibly appear in all the fullness of power which it really



possessed. Had it permanently remained in a position towards the poet similar to that which the latter in opera has now taken up towards the musician, music would have been so restrained that it could not possibly have attained to the position of that mighty and universal means of expression which it is to-day. But, having to test itself in what must ever remain impossible, it naturally fell into the error of assuming itself to be a perfect means of expression for the definite; and of venturing accordingly upon the proud project of issuing orders and expressing desires in a domain where it is condemned by its very nature to be for ever subordinate. Yet in subordination lies the realisation of that ennoblement which it is the pride of music to contribute towards the object in view.

54. On two sides we may observe the development of music in what may be considered its own special art-form—the opera. On the one **Earnest and Frivolous Tendencies.** hand, there is the earnest course pursued by those composers who have thoroughly realised the responsibility of music in undertaking the sole dramatic expression. On the other, there is a frivolous course; or, the one pursued by those composers who, instinctively impressed by the impossibility of fulfilling so difficult an undertaking, have simply renounced it; preferring to enjoy the advantages resulting from the wide popularity to which opera had attained, and engaging in what may be described as unalloyed experiment.

It is desirable in the first place to give some attention to the more *earnest* of the two courses alluded to.

## HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SERIOUS OPERA.

55. The musical foundation of the opera was, as we know, nothing but the aria; which, in turn, was nothing but the volkslied; artificially transformed by the singer for performance before the fashionable world; and with its original words ousted in favour of the production of a poet appointed for that purpose. The evolution of the aria from the old melody was due to the singer in the first place; who, ceasing to care about its correct rendering, regarded it only as the medium for displaying his vocal attainments. Upon his decision depended where pauses were to be made; where changes from lively to restful expression were to take place; and where, free from all rhythmic and melodic restraint, he might bring to the hearer's notice, and to any extent he chose, his feats of vocal skill. Thus, the poet supplied the composer, and the composer the singer, with material upon which to base the display of their ability.

56. The just relation between the various artistic elements which go to constitute the drama here presents itself, fundamentally, as not completely upset, but merely disturbed; for the reason that the interpreter, as indispensable condition for the drama in its entirety, represented only one form of capability (that of absolute song); and not by any means the complete range of faculties appertaining to an artist. Moreover, the same displacement of the interpreter's vocation was,

furthermore, the cause of unnatural relations between other elements; and particularly of preference being given to the composer rather than to the poet.

57. But, had the singer been an interpreter in the full sense of the word, the composer would have been obliged to take up his proper position towards the poet; because, in such a case, it would have been for the latter to have decreed unmistakably what was the dramatic purpose, and what were to be its means of realisation. Instead of that, it was the musical composer who was nearest the singer; and who, occupying the position of poet in relation to him, assisted him to accomplish what he had in view. This object, however, had nothing to do either with dramatic or even with poetical relations; for it was literally nothing else than the glorification of his own powers.

58. This primal interdependence of artistic elements in opera has to be thoroughly borne in mind during all which follows; as by this means, we shall clearly recognise how the above state of disturbance became worse and worse, even as the result of efforts to apply a remedy.

59. The next thing to happen was the addition of the ballet to the dramatic cantata in order to appease the luxurious longings of the upper world for some variety in its pleasures. Both the dance itself and its melody were now just as arbitrarily taken from old sources and reproduced in imitation, as the aria had already been from the volkslied; and, accordingly, the dance now tacked itself on to the singer's artistic display, with the barren quality

**The Ballet  
asspringing  
from the  
Folk-Dance.**

of lacking all suitability for union; so that the problem naturally arose for the poet to effect, as best he could, some show of unity between the various items of artistic display thus presented to him in a sort of incongruous heap.

60. This ever-increasing call for unity between things which in their nature presented no suitability for being brought together at all was thus met by the poet's assistance; and the real object of the drama, as the mere result of a compliance with outward necessity, was set forth indeed, but by no means properly taken up. Vocal and dance pieces remained, notwithstanding their association, in a state of complete isolation; the necessary bond between them depending upon recitative—the only means left to the poet wherewith to exercise his subordinate vocation, and to enable the drama to make itself occasionally felt.

61. But, even recitative was no new discovery; nor did it in any way owe its introduction to the **Recitative** real dramatic necessities of the opera. **as spring-** Long before this kind of vocal speech **ing from** had found a place in, the latter it had **Church-** already been utilised by the Christian **Song.** Church for the liturgical delivery of portions of scripture. This had been fixed by ecclesiastical authority at an early date; but, as such recitations consisted of banal settings which were merely recitatives in appearance (seeing that their melodic progressions were so indifferently chosen as to have little reference to rhetorical expression) in passing over to the opera, they, also, became remodelled and variously changed.

62. Thus it was that the entire machinery of the music-drama was brought together, and became so settled that the material of song, dance and recitative forms the essential contents of all such works, right down to the newest opera. The dramatic plans underlying this machinery were not long in acquiring a similarly settled character, and, being generally based upon hopeless misconceptions of Greek mythology and epics, they soon formed a common theatrical stock utterly bereft of all qualities calculated to arouse emotion or sympathy. On the other hand, they presented the feature of offering themselves equally to the service of all composers; and, as a matter of fact, the greater part of them have been set and reset, by composers of every conceivable type.

63. Gluck's revolution, which has become so celebrated, and which sounds to many ignorant people like a total change of hitherto prevailing notions about the constitution of opera, really consisted of nothing more than the uprising of the composer against the singer's caprice. The composer who, next to the singer, had personally attracted public attention on account of having supplied the singer with the material for display, felt himself injured by this action of the singer; and this, precisely in the degree to which he had been at pains so to present this material as to display his own originality with the object of presenting his work also, and, it may be, even only his work, to the listener.

64. Two roads lay open to the composer for

attainment of the object of his ambition. Either he could develop the purely sensuous contents of the air, employing for this purpose all auxiliaries whether actually at hand or thereafter to be discovered. Or, he could take the more serious course—the one which we, for the present, will have to follow—that of restricting all arbitrary rendering of the air by making its expression correspond with that of the underlying text. When, in its very nature, this text required to be presented as the passionate speech of acting characters, it became a foregone conclusion that, henceforth, sympathetic singers and composers must impress their execution with the seal of whatever warmth was required; and Gluck was by no means the first to write such feeling arias, nor were his singers the first to give them an expressive delivery.

65. That which constitutes Gluck the starting point of what must, at any rate, be considered a complete reform in the mutual relations of the artistic factors of opera, is, however, that he delivered himself with full consciousness and upon principle respecting the necessity of giving, to both air and recitative, an expression corresponding with that of the text.

66. From that time the domination in opera matters passed incontestably over to the composer; the singer becoming the instrument for carrying out his ideas, and these ideas being now declared based upon the acknowledged necessity of giving to the dramatic contents of the text its true expression. All this only placed an obstacle to the leading singer's

**Domi-  
nation of the  
Composer  
in Opera.**

ill-placed and unfeeling egotism; as everything else with regard to the entire unnatural constitution of the opera remained entirely as before. Aria, recitative and dance all remain in Gluck's opera entirely shut off from one another; and just as unadjusted to the work as they were before; and as is the case nearly always, even up to the present time.

67. The situation of the poet remained quite unchanged, except that the composer had become **Subordin-** more dictatorial towards him. This was **ation of** a consequence of the composer having **the Poet.** made good his claim against the principal singer, and of his now having a higher object in view. He therefore applied himself with more calculated earnestness to the opera's general arrangements. It never occurred to the poet to interfere in any way with these dispositions. He could form no other idea of music than as associated with the forms presented to him, from which opera had sprung, and by which the composer was, alike, bound. He would have thought it preposterous to interfere with these forms, from respect for any demands of dramatic necessity, in such a way as to prevent their remaining impediments to the free development of dramatic truth; for the reason that it was through these very forms, which had equally to be observed by the composer, that he had derived his entire ideas of music.

68. The poet's obligations in offering himself for the provision of an opera text were, therefore, even more painful than those of the musician himself in respect of the observance of these forms. At most, he could only rely on the musician for any exten-

sions and developments; to which, as they were carried out by the musician on his own familiar ground, he might be of some assistance; but in which he could never take the lead. It thus happened that the poet rather contributed to the composer's supremacy in opera than offered any claim in opposition to it, for he regarded him with a sort of saintly dread, and realised the enthusiasm which the composer applied to his undertaking.

69. It was Gluck's successors who were first mindful of drawing advantage from the situation

thus created for them in respect of broadening the forms already in use.

**Extension of Operatic Musical Forms.** These successors comprise those com-

posers of French and Italian origin who, at close of the last and beginning of the present century, wrote for the Paris opera theatres, and who gave to their vocal compositions, in addition to a more complete warmth and truth of direct expression, a much broader formal outline. There was a virtual retention of the customary sections of the air; but they were provided with more various motive transitions, and bridge passages were even introduced into the integral domain of expression; the recitative followed upon the air with a truer expression, and less capriciously, and entered even into the expression of the air itself.

70. The aria also now became the object of another important development; as it depended upon dramatic necessity whether more than one person should take part in its performance, hence the essential monody of all previous opera advantageously disappeared. Such pieces as duets



and trios had already, it is true, been long known; though the fact of two or three singing in one piece had really altered nothing in the character of the aria. The latter remained, so far as concerned its melodic outline or the prevalence of its thematic material when once asserted, precisely the same as it had nothing to do with individual expression, but only with a general mood of specifically musical kind. Nothing material was altered in it, irrespective of whether it might be delivered by one voice or two; or, at most, mere detail—such as the alternation of a phrase by two different voices, or the latter's association in order to present the harmonic feature of the vocal two or three-part phrase.

71. These composers had the specific aim of carrying out this plan to an extent rendering it capable of imparting a lively interchange of individual expression, as is shown by their treatment of the so-called dramatic "ensemble." The really musical essence of this ensemble still remained confined to the aria, recitative and dance; except that it became recognised as following necessarily that, when once a vocal expression in accordance with the text had been admitted, truth of that expression had to be extended to any other features connected with it which the text might appear to present.

72. It was from the frank attempt to respond to this necessary consequence that the development of the ancient opera forms arose, such as we find them in the serious operas of Cherubini, Mehul and Spontini; so much so, that these works may be said to realise all that Gluck wanted, or could have

**Character-  
istics of the  
Cherubini,  
Mehul.  
Spontini  
Opera.**

wanted. Moreover, all that could possibly be developed of a natural character or that was logical in the best sense consistently with the original foundations of the opera, was, in them, once for all attained.

73. The last of these three masters, Spontini, was accordingly so thoroughly persuaded of having attained to the summit of what was possible in opera work—he had so firm a belief in the impossibility of his productions ever being surpassed—that, in all his more recent artistic works following upon those of his great Paris epoch, he never sought in the least degree to infringe upon the standpoint as to form and signification which he had therein adopted.

74. Spontini positively declined to regard the so-called romantic development of opera as anything else than unmistakable sign of its decay; and impressed all those to whom he spoke upon this matter as being so enamoured with himself, and with his own works, as to be bereft of judgment; whilst, strictly speaking, he was only uttering a conviction really based upon an inherently healthy view of the nature of opera.

75. It would have been open to Spontini, in view of the pretensions of modern opera, to say with the most perfect right:

Have you developed the essential forms of the musical constituent parts of opera further than you find them developed in my works?

Or.:

Have you been able to realise anything intelligible or healthy by going beyond that form? Is not everything dis-

agreeable in your works the simple consequence of your departure from that form?—and, has not what you have produced of an enjoyable description been confined to occasions when you have observed it? Where does this form exist in nobler, broader or more comprehensive state than in my three great Paris operas? And, who is there to say to me that he has furnished these forms with more glowing, expressive or powerful contents than I?

76. It would be difficult to embarrass Spontini by any reply given to these questions; and, still more so, to prove to him that he is insane when he holds us to be so. Spontini is the mouthpiece of the straightforward absolute musician of strong convictions, who through him announces to all concerned that:

If the musician alone, as disposer of the opera wishes to erect the drama he cannot, without exposing his entire inability to do so, go one step further than I have done.

But herein the further invitation is unconsciously expressed:

If you really desire more than this, it is not to the musician that you must apply, but to the poet.

---

#### THE POET'S ISOLATED POSITION.

77. What was this poet's relation to Spontini and his contemporaries? His position had not altered in the slightest, as a consequence of all this progress of musical opera-form; or of this development of the means of expression contained in it. He was still the preparer of text-support for

**Progress un-  
associated  
with Im-  
provement  
in the Poet's  
Condition.**

the composer's absolutely independent experiments. If, in consequence of any accomplished success, the latter felt an increase of power in free movement within that form, he simply gave the poet to understand that he need not have the same anxiety or scruple in applying his material. Practically it was as if he said to him :

Look at what I am able to accomplish ! No need to trouble yourself ; rely on my power to bring your most venturesome dramatic combinations with all their peculiarities into solution with my music !

78. In this way, the poet was simply borne along by the musician ; and would have been quite abashed had he presented his wooden hobby-horse, whilst the musician was able to mount a real live one, in handling the reins of which he was particularly skilful. These were the musical reins destined to train the horse, after the recognised manner, in the well-smoothed, opera-riding track ; and without which no musician or poet trusted himself, from dread that, if he did so, the horse would overjump the enclosure and hasten away to its own wild, noble, natural home.

79. Nevertheless, in association with the composer, the poet attained to greater importance ; **Estimate of the Poet's Position at the Time of Spontini.** though this was restricted to the precise measure of the musician's onward progress, which he merely followed. Nothing stood before him but the strictly musical possibilities indicated by the composer. These were the standard for all questions of form and arrangement ; even regulating the choice of material. Any fame to which he began to attain,

therefore, was attached to his being able to serve the "dramatic" composer thus suitably and usefully.

80. The composer, moreover, could scarcely take any other view than this of the situation of the poet; considering the state of things already presented to him by the very nature of opera. Thus, regarding himself as the actual responsible factor of opera, he could conscientiously preserve Spontini's standpoint as the most applicable to the case, and as affording him the satisfaction of feeling that he was doing everything which a musician could do, who desired to see the opera, as a musical drama, entitled to legitimate claim as an art-form.

81. That the drama itself, however, contained possibilities which could not be even so much as **Mistaken Impres-** touched within this art-form (at all  
**sions of** events without destroying it) may be  
**both Poet** clear to us now; but it could do no other-  
**and** wise than completely escape both the  
**Composer.** composer and poet of that period. Out of all dramatic possibilities existing, those only which were capable of attainment within that rigidly fixed opera-form, so seriously impeded by its very nature, could arrest their attention. The wide extension, the dwelling upon a motive which the musician found necessary to intelligible expression within his form, as well as other purely musical auxiliaries which he needed in order, as it were, to set his bell in motion, so that it should not only intone, but do so just in the manner to expressly correspond with a fixed character—all this made it, from time immemorial, the poet's business to restrict

himself to a rigidly fixed description of dramatic project; such projects as contained within themselves room for the capacious ease necessary to the musician for his experiments.

82. It fell to the poet's duty to use a stereotype of rhetorical phrases in his expression, because only

**Limitation of the Poet's Means of Expression.** upon this basis could the musician find space for his developments, which were, nevertheless, strictly speaking, entirely undramatic. Had the poet allowed his

heroes to speak in short, precise and well-compressed terms he would have merely attracted to himself the reproaches of the composer on the impracticability of his poem. As, therefore, the poet was compelled, in this way, to give to his heroes commonplace and meaningless discourse, it was no longer possible to him, even with the best will in the world, to impart a real character to the persons speaking in this way, or to give to the context of their action the seal of a full dramatic truth.

83. The poet's drama therefore became, more and more, a mere semblance of drama; and to obtain the full results of a real dramatic object never presented itself to his mind. He therefore really translated the drama into the opera dialect, if we wish to be precise; and this resulted in his generally even confining himself to plays which had long been known; and to those, therefore, which had been well worn upon the dramatic stage.

84. Plays of which the public had been surfeited in this way were worked up into operas, as particularly happened in the case of the tragedies of the Théâtre Français. The object of the drama,

having thus become hollow and insignificant, took now professedly the form of the composer's intention; from the latter the effect being expected which the poet had formerly given. It therefore necessarily fell to the composer to make up for the hollowness and insignificance of the entire work as soon as he perceived it. He could also see that the unnatural duty fell to him of forming an aim and actually calling one into being; though, from his standpoint, this dramatic aim should have been placed before him in perfect form, and his duty confined to helping it by means of the expression at his command. Strictly speaking, the musician had, according to this, practically to write the drama, and to render his music not merely its expression, but its material; and this dramatic material could, in the very nature of things, be no other than the drama itself.

85. It is from this point that the strange confusion of ideas regarding the nature of music, and conveyed by the term "dramatic," becomes so evident. Music which, as an art of expression, can be no more than true even when this expression attains its greatest height, has here, in the very nature of things, to confine its attentions to what it should express. In the opera such expression is unquestionably due to the feeling of the characters who are speaking; and music which provides this with convincing effect has already become all that is desirable. A description of music, however, which aspires to more than this—which disdains to relate to an object to be expressed, but itself

**Confusion  
of Ideas  
resulting  
from False  
Relation of  
Poet and  
Musician.**

wishes to be that object—is, at root, no longer music at all, but a monstrous abstraction; the result of a fantastic combination of music and poetry, which can only take form as caricature.

86. In spite of all contrary attempts, music (at least such music as can be in any way regarded as effective) has remained expression, and expression alone. From the efforts to convert it into a material, and, in fact, to make of it the material of the drama, are to be traced those inevitable results which we now recognise as the decay of the opera; and, hence, as manifest proof of the total want of conformity to nature of this particular art-species.

87. Whatever may be said of the basis or actual material of the Spontini opera as to hollowness and insignificance, or as to the circumscribed and pedantic character of the forms therein displayed, it was at any rate, within its limits, an honest and clear confession of what might be done within such bounds, without pursuing what was unnatural therein to the extent of madness. Modern opera, on the other hand, is the public declaration of that madness as having actually happened.

88. In order the better to explain its nature we will now turn to that other course of operatic development which we indicated just now as frivolous; and which, by its admixture with the serious opera alluded to, has contributed to evolve that indescribable confused mass which we hear sometimes called “modern dramatic opera”; even by people who are otherwise, to all appearance, reasonable.





## CHAPTER II

### EPITOME.

(89) First dramatic impulse in development of the aria. (90) The tendencies respectively favoured in France and Italy. (91) The artistic nature of Mozart. (92) His aspirations. (93) The errors of deeming Mozart a tentative, and Mendelssohn a naïve, musician. (94) The really naïve musician defined. (95) The *naïveté* of Mozart illustrated. (96) Mozart's greatness in opera and his voluntary subordination to the poet. (97) Mozart's inspiration dependent upon the poetical contents. (98) Mozart's diversity of style. (99) The probable influence upon Mozart's greatness had the right poet appeared. (100) Mozart's artistic treatment of poor libretti. (101) Mozart's work of transcendental value within the forms as then existing. (102) Their exhaustion at his disappearance. (103) Mozart's slight influence upon the history of opera on account of his adhering to old forms. (104) The poor figure presented by Mozart's followers. (105) The new tendency of glorification of the aria. (106) The aria's essentially artificial character. (107) The origin of the aria illustrated. (108) The necessary condition for giving the aria a natural character. (109) The aria a musical extract. (110) The aria's real disconnection from text and dramatic motive. (111) Rossini's mode of procedure in treatment of the aria defined. (112) The Mozart aria's variable inspiration in accordance with poetic basis. (113) Rossini's decision not to be a follower of Spontini. (114) Takes absolute melody as his basis. (115) The practical character of Rossini's genius. (116) The introduction of Rossini's melody fatal to "dramatic opera." (117) Rossini's contempt for form-cultivation. (118) Rossini's mode of procedure pleasing to the various factors of opera. (119) Rossini's extreme deference to the public taste. (120) His mistake in accepting the advice to improve his form. (121) Rossini's keen insight into the conditions for public approbation. (122) The effect of Rossini's music in constituting the public the real and only factor of the opera. (123) Rossini reactionary or revolutionary according to point of view. (124) The Rossini and political tendencies compared. (125) Reasons for regarding Rossini as concluding a period of opera history. (126) What Rossini's reflections should have been. (127) The surprise in opera which Paris had in store. (128) The course of opera compared with that of the Byzantine empire. (129) What Spontini could not foresee. (130) Rossini's prophetic instinct equally at fault. (131) The expiation of his error.

## CHAPTER II.

### LIGHT AND COMIC OPERA.

89. AS we have already said it had spontaneously arisen in the minds of singers and good **Reflective** composers, possessed of noble gifts and **and naïve** sentiments, long before Gluck, that the **Tendencies** delivery of the operatic air should **in Opera** exhibit a more sincere expression, and **Compared.** that—all their vocal bravura and execution generally, notwithstanding—it should communicate a real feeling and true passion to the listener, not only at every situation where the text rendered this possible, but even where the latter afforded such expression but little encouragement. This feature depended entirely upon the individual dispositions of the various factors of opera, and in it the true nature of music proved itself triumphant over formalism to the extent that this art, in pursuance of its nature, therein asserts itself as the immediate language of the heart.

90. If, in the development of the opera, and in respect of that noble property of music which Gluck and his followers adopted formally as supreme in

dramatic matters, we choose to call the tendency thus adopted the *reflective* tendency, we must, on the other hand, call that other tendency, in which (particularly in Italian opera theatres) this property, in the hands of happily gifted musicians, was quite unconsciously and spontaneously brought to the front, the *naïve* tendency. Of the first of these tendencies it is characteristic that, in Paris, where it was an important product, it developed in view of a public which is altogether unmusical, and more inclined to appreciate well-ordered and dazzling modes of speech than any sentimental contents of the speech itself. On the other hand, the second, or *naïve* tendency, remained the special possession of the sons of that fatherland of modern music—Italy.

91. Though it was a German who displayed this tendency in its highest splendour, his high calling was only imparted to him on account of his artistic nature being of the untroubled spotless clearness of a bright water surface, to which the choicest bloom of Italian music bowed its head, just as before a mirror; gazing upon, recognising and loving its own image.

92. This mirror, however, was only the upper surface of a deep and endless sea of aspirations and longings, which, from the immeasurable fullness of its being, presented the surface, as it were, in indication of its contents; seeming to wish to gather shapeliness and beauty from the gentle greeting of the beautiful manifestation, which bowed to it as if thirsting for knowledge of its own being.

93. Whoever holds Mozart to have been an

**Mozart  
and Men-  
delssohn  
Compared.**

experimenting musician, turning from one trial to another, and thus, for example, trying to solve the operatic problem, can estimate this error by placing another at the side of it; as, for example, that Mendelssohn was *naïve* when he distrusted his own powers, and would only approach opera from a distance, timidly and hesitatingly; and then, only by slow degrees.\*

94. The really *naïve* and inspired artist is the one who dives, with enthusiastic recklessness, into his art-work; and who, only when this is ready and confronting him as a reality, acquires, from experience, that genuine faculty of reflection which mostly protects him from mistakes. Yet this entirely loses power over him from the moment that, in any special case, he feels impelled by an inspiration to recommence his art work.

95. With reference to Mozart, and his career as an opera composer, nothing is more characteristic **Mozart's** than the careless lack of choice with **Noble** which he began his work. It was so little **Intuition.** a concern of his to bother himself about the æsthetic scruples which fundamentally affect the question of opera, that he may be rather said to have engaged with the greatest indifference upon the composition of any text which offered; altogether unmoved by considerations as to whether it favoured him as a pure musician, or whether it did not. Let us take those æsthetic remarks and sayings of his, which have been here and there preserved, altogether,

---

\* The author of the article, "Modern Music," mentioned in the introduction has done both. (Original note.)

and we find that the sum total of his reflections rises no higher than his celebrated definition of his nose. He was such an out-and-out musician—so exclusively a musician, and nothing else—that, in him, we are able to grasp, in the plainest and most convincing way, the true and right position of the musician towards the poet.

96. The most weighty and decisive achievements of Mozart for music were undoubtedly in opera; and, in opera, despite of the fact that he never aspired therein to the poetical supremacy, being ever content to supply just that which he could effect by purely musical means. Yet, in this way, by the simple process of faithfully and calmly taking the poet's aim in hand, wherever and in whatever manner it might happen to present itself, this purely musical means developed to such a remarkable extent that we cannot trace in any of his absolute musical compositions (and therefore particularly not in his instrumental compositions) so advanced and rich a development of musical art as in his operas.

97. The grandly noble and intellectual simplicity of Mozart's instinct, or, in other words, his intuitive insight into the being of his art rendered it impossible for him, as a composer, to introduce charming and entrancing effects where the poet might happen to be dull and insignificant. How little did this most richly endowed of all musicians understand the trick of the modern music-maker—that of erecting tinsel music towers upon a hollow and unworthy basis, and of mimicking inspiration where the poetical work is void and empty, just to

show that the musician is in command; and that he is so well able to do anything, that he can make something out of nothing—after the manner of God himself!

98. How lovable and worthy of reverence does Mozart seem to me, through not having found it possible to write the same style of music for "Titus" as for "Don Juan"; or for "Cosi fan tutte" as for "Figaro"! How shamefully it would have dishonoured music had he done so!

99. Music, Mozart could always write, but, beautiful music only when he was inspired; and, **The Relation of the Poet to Mozart's Inspiration.** although this inspiration could only come from within, and from his own inward powers, yet it only made a bright and enlightening appearance when illuminated from without; and when, to the genius of God-like love within him, was added the object worthy of love, which, in the warmth of self-forgetfulness, he might embrace. And thus it would surely have fallen to the lot of this most absolute of all musicians, Mozart, to have long since clearly solved the opera problem, by helping to give us the truest, the most beautiful and the most complete drama; if only the right poet had met him—that is, the poet whom he would have only had to help.

100. The right kind of poet, however, never did meet Mozart, but it was not long before either a tiresome and pedantic opera librettist, or else a frivolous and sprightly writer of the same sort began to offer him airs, duets and ensemble pieces for composition. These, according to the warmth which they succeeded in awakening within him, he

then proceeded to set to music, in which these pieces received the most suitable expression which, according to their contents, they were capable of sustaining.

101. In all this Mozart had only displayed the inexhaustible power of music to respond, in the

**Mozart's** most unexpected fullness, to every  
**Power** demand of the poet upon its powers of  
**of purely** expression · and, by means of his simple  
**Musical** procedure, this lordly musician really  
**Expression.** revealed the power of music in a far richer degree, as regards even the truth of dramatic expression and the inexhaustible diffuseness of motive treatment, than Gluck and all his followers. Anything of fundamental nature was so little expressed in any of his works, or doings, that the mighty waftings of his genius left the formal outline of opera entirely undisturbed. All he had done was to pour into the opera-forms the fire stream of his music. But they were impotent to restrain this flood; and, accordingly, it flowed beyond their bounds, seeking continually for some freer and broader expanse, where its natural longing might have room to spread; until we meet it again, swollen into the mighty sea of Beethoven's symphonies.

102. Thus, whilst in pure instrumental music the peculiar capability of music developed into immeasurable power, these opera forms, like burnt-out brickwork, stood, naked and shivering, within their old shapes; waiting for the new guest to strike his temporary home within them.

103. It is only for the history of music in



general that Mozart is of such surprisingly weighty significance, for this importance by no means extends to the history of the opera as a particular department of art. The opera being, in consequence of its unnatural presence not bound for its life to any law of actual necessity, was free to be exploited by the first musical adventurer who might happen to appear.

104. The sorry sight afforded by the activities of Mozart's so-called followers we may profitably pass over in silence. A goodly list of composers there were who seemed to think that the Mozart opera could be imitated through the form; obviously overlooking the fact that this form had been really nothing, whilst Mozart's musical gift had been simply everything in the matter.

That the creations of the spirit cannot be pedantically reconstructed by calculation, is shown by the fact that no one has ever succeeded in effecting such an operation.

---

#### ROSSINI.

105. Only one thing remained to be expressed in these forms. Mozart, in his untroubled simplicity, has developed their musical possibilities to the utmost; but the very basis of the opera scheme, according to its fountain of origin, remained still to be exposed in those same forms; and that, with the most unreserved and naked publicity. It was still

**The  
Tendency  
after  
Mozart.**

due to the world to be told, plainly and straightforwardly, to what artistic aspirations and requirements opera owed its origin and existence; that these aspirations proceeded in no sense from the actual drama; but were simply in favour of the gratification of an intoxicating and superficially disportive enjoyment, merely seasoned by stage appliances; and one not, in any sense, emotional or, inwardly enlivening. In Italy, where this still unconscious aspiration had originally resulted in opera, it was destined, at last, with full consciousness, to receive fulfilment.

106. We must now return to a closer view of the nature of the aria. So long as arias are composed will the fundamental character of **Closer Account of the Aria.** this art form be obliged to present itself as one of absolute music. The folk-song originated in a union of poetry and music which was immediate, and which was associated with the equal development of each; such development being mutual, at every stage. The musical art thus in question was one to which the name of art would scarcely apply if compared with the only kind of art now recognised—that of a professedly formal culture; and might be better described, perhaps, as—spontaneous manifestation of the folk-spirit through art-means. Here, we have tone poem and word poem, as one. Never does it occur to the people to sing without words; for them, there is no tune apart from verse. Should the course of time, or various branches of the race, bring about changes in the tune, a corresponding change takes place in

the verse. To the people, no separation is conceivable; the two being, to them, one indivisible total—like man and wife.

107. The man of luxury heard the folk-song from a distance. He listened, from his grand mansion, to the reapers as they passed along; and, so much of the tune as penetrated to his sumptuous chamber, was the mere tone succession—as to the word-succession it failed to reach his ear. Say, that the tune was as the delightful scent of the flower; then, the words were as the body of the flower itself, with all its tender stamens. The man of luxury was content to enjoy the flower in the one sense of giving pleasure to his olfactory nerves, unassociated with corresponding pleasure to the eye. He extracted the scent from the flower; he distilled the perfume and he drew it off into bottles, in order to be able, either to carry it about with him, or to sprinkle his splendid household surroundings with it at his pleasure.

-108. In order to enjoy the aspect of the flower it would have been necessary for the man of luxury to draw nearer. He would have had to descend from his palace to the green fields, and to force his way through briars, leaves and branches; for all of which this man of superiority and comfort had no inclination.

109. With this sweet-smelling extract he now sprinkled the sterile waste which formed his life; and the hollowness and nothingness which formed his heart's emotion. The artificial growth which this unnatural fertilising agency evolved was none other than the operatic aria. The form might be

forced into the most various or inventive combinations; but, ever unfruitful, because ever itself, it could never be anything else than what it was originally—a mere musical extract.

110. The entire ærial body of the aria passed off in the melody; being sung, and at last fiddled and piped, but without seeming conscious that any text, or even any sense, was due to underlie it. The more this extract  
**The Aria's**  
**unduly**  
**Luxurious**  
**Expression.** (with a view to providing it with some kind of material for bodily clinging to) was applied to experiments of all kinds, and notably to the drama as the most majestic and earnest, the more it was felt that it was badly affected by all this medley of barren and strange elements; and that it was actually losing its own strength and delightfulness of fragrance.

111. The composer who now took this extract in hand, unnatural as it was, who gave it back a body, and who imparted to that body, artificial as it was, at least as illusively as possible, the appearance of being like the one which formerly yielded scent from its natural fullness, and sent it forth with the air as the spirit of its being: that uncommonly skilful concocter of artificial flowers which he made from silk and satin, touched up with deceptive tints, and the chalices of which he then sprinkled with the extract until they seemed to give forth fragrance like the natural flower—that great artist was Joachimo Rossini.

112. In the case of Mozart this extract found

in that noble, healthy, single-minded and artistic nature such a nutritive soil as to give forth beautiful flowers of genuine art which held our souls entranced. But, even with Mozart, this only happened when what was coherent, healthy and purely human was presented to him in poetical form, for the purpose of being allied with his entirely musical nature. For this to happen repeatedly, moreover, was mostly only a question of the merest good fortune; and, when Mozart was deserted by this fructifying spirit, this artificial perfume still managed (though bereft of true and necessary vigour) to sustain itself by artificial means. However luxurious a melody might be, it still suffered by cold and lifeless formalism; but this form was the only legacy which had been bequeathed by the untimely departed; for, in dying, he had taken life away with him.

113. What Rossini had to survey in the first bloom of his exultant youth was this harvest of death. When he looked upon the French so-called serious and dramatic opera, he did so with the quick sight imparted by youthful delight in existence; and he recognised, in it, a stately corpse which even Spontini, striding forth in splendid isolation, was unable to quicken; since he embalmed himself, while still alive, as if for his own solemn ennoblement.

114. Impelled by the bold instinct of life Rossini tore the pompous mask from the face of this corpse, as if to search into the grounds of its former existence. Through all the pomp of the shrouding garments, he made discovery of what was the true

life-foundation for all this empty show; the discovery, that is, of melody. When he looked upon the native Italian opera and the work of Mozart's heirs he could trace nothing but death once more—death in those empty forms; the only life he could perceive issuing from which consisted of melody—absolute melody stripped of all that assumption of character which must have seemed to him as altogether hypocritical, when he took into consideration all that had sprung from it, and that was unfinished, pretentious and immature.

115. Rossini, however, had the full intention of *living*; and, in order to do that, he quite well understood that he must cast his lot **Rossini's bid for Popularity.** where there were people with ears to hear him. Since the only sign of operatic life appearing to him consisted of absolute melody, all he had to do was to be mindful as to the kind of melody to be adopted, in order to secure a hearing. He had no eyes for the pedantic score-full, preferring to listen to people who sang without notes; and, what he heard in that way, that which had spontaneously remained within recall of hearing out of the entire operatic set-out, was simple, ear-pleasing, absolutely melodic melody; or, in other words, melody that was just melody, and nothing else; melody that we catch, we know not why; we hum, we know not why; which to-day we exchange for that of yesterday, and to-morrow shall change again, we also know not why; that sounds mournful when we are gay, and gay when we are put out, and which we continue to "tra-la"—though we have not the faintest knowledge of any reason why.

116. Rossini started this kind of melody; and —lo!—the whole secret of opera was out. All that **The Rossini Style an Opposition to Previous Efforts.** reflection and æsthetic speculation had built up, Rossini's opera melodies so completely destroyed that it seemed to have been blown away; vanishing like a baseless phantom. This is what happened to "dramatic opera," just as to learning with its problems, the ground for which is, in truth, but a deceptive show; as the problems always become more misleading and insolvable, the more deeply they are inquired into. At last, however, the sword of Alexander will do its work; casting the leather knot asunder, and allowing its thousand thongs to fall on every side. The sword of Alexander is the simple deed; the same kind of deed which Rossini actually accomplished when he called the entire opera publics of the world to witness the certain truth that whereas mistaken artists held the view that musical expression was to supply the contents and aim of the drama, all that the people wanted to hear was "beautiful melody."

117. The whole world applauded Rossini for his melodies; and applauded one, therefore, who **The Rossini Flood of Success.** understood excellently well how to make a special art out of the application of such melodies. All organisation of form he left completely on one side; and, as against that, he took the simplest, driest and most superficial form which came to hand; and filled it with all the logical contents which it had ever required—that being narcotic and intoxicating melody.

118. Quite untroubled about form, seeing that he left it entirely undisturbed, he applied his entire genius to nothing but the most amusing antics which he could carry out within those limits. To the singers, who had hitherto been obliged to study the dramatic expression of a wearisome and meaningless text, he said :

Do as you please with the words ; but, be sure not to forget to get yourselves well applauded for rapid runs and acrobatic vocalisation.

Who could obey him more readily than the singers ? To the instrumentalists, who had hitherto been drilled into accompanying the pathetic vocal phrases as intelligently as possible, and with unity of ensemble, he said :

Take it easy ; but, be sure not to forget, where I have given you the opportunity, to get yourselves properly clapped for your individual execution.

Who would more zealously thank him than the instrumentalists ? To the librettist, who had hitherto perspired in drops of blood under the autocratic directions of the composer, he said :

Friend ! do as you like ; for I want you no more.

Who could feel more indebted to him for such deliverance from thankless painful labour than the opera-poet ?

119. But, who could deify Rossini more decidedly for all these benefits than did the whole civilised world ; so far as the opera-theatre could comprise it ? And who could have more ground to do so ? What composer was there, with so much power,

**Rossini's  
Pandering  
to the  
Public.**



who had been so profoundly gracious towards it—as Rossini? If he happened to learn that the public of a given town had a special desire to hear runs from the principal singers; or, that, at another town, the people preferred the expressive “cantabile,” he forthwith provided his singers with nothing but runs for the first town, and expressive cantabile for the second. If he heard that, in one place, they liked to hear the drum in the orchestra, he at once arranged for the overture to a rustic opera to begin with a drum-roll; or, if they told him that, in another place, there was a passionate fondness for the crescendo in ensemble pieces, he arranged for his opera to be in the form of one crescendo after another, all the time.

120. Only on one occasion did he find reason to regret being so obliging. For Naples, he was advised to proceed more cautiously, in respect of the outline of his movements. But, the more genuinely composed opera which resulted was not a success; from which time Rossini made up his mind never, as long as he lived, to take any more pains—even if specially advised to do so.

121. Had Rossini made a survey of the enormous success of his treatment of the opera, it could not in the least have been accounted to him as vanity, or arrogant pride, if he had laughed people in the face; and declared that he had found the true secret of the opera, after which all his predecessors had been simply groping. When he asserted that it would be easy for him to cause the operas of his greatest predecessors (even including Mozart’s “Don Juan”)

**Rossini's  
Command  
of the Pub-  
lic Voice.**

to be forgotten; and this, by the simple process of taking the same subject and composing to it after his own manner, this did not, by any means amount to arrogance on his part, for he merely gave expression to the certain instinct he possessed, as to what the public really desired in opera.

122. As a matter of fact, our musical dogmatists could only have looked on at the appearance of a Rossini-setting of "Don Juan," with feelings of deepest shame; for, without risk, we may assume that Mozart's "Don Juan" would have had to give way to one by Rossini in the estimation of the real opera-going public, whose voice is decisive in the matter; and this, at any rate for a long time, if not for ever. For this is the decisive stroke which Rossini dealt at this opera-question: he made the opera appeal to the public for all that it was worth; making the public thereby, with its wishes and inclinations, the real factor of the opera.

123. Had the public had in any sense the character, or significance, of being the People in the proper sense of the word, Rossini would have had to appear to us as the most thorough-going revolutionary within the region of art. To one portion of our society he was a reactionary; that being a section which can, however, only be regarded as an unnatural outgrowth from the people. It is one to be estimated as a mere nest of caterpillars, gnawing the wholesome, nourishing leaves of the natural folk-tree, in order to derive therefrom, at least, the strength to flutter through a brief existence of pleasure; as a swarm of giddy, playful butterflies. To such a refuse-portion of the people, which, from

a putrefied mass, may emerge to a wicked form of elegance, but which can never rise to any true, beautiful or human culture—in short, to speak plainly, to our opera-public, Rossini was only a reactionary; whilst we have to regard Gluck and his followers as revolutionaries, by method, and on principle; though powerless ones, if we are to judge by actual results.

124. As representing the luxurious but only real, contents of the Opera and the logical development of the same, Joachimo Rossini re-acted successfully against the doctrinaire and revolutionary maxims of Gluck in the same way as Prince Metternich, his great protector, had done, as representing the inhuman, but only real, content of the European State-system and its logical enforcement against the doctrinaire maxims of the liberal revolutionaries; when the latter desired, within this State-system, and without absolute upheaval of its unnatural content, to use the same forms which then gave it expression for the establishment of the human and reasonable. Just as Metternich was fully justified in failing to enter into any idea of the State other than under absolute monarchy, so was Rossini equally justified in failing to conceive of Opera otherwise than under absolute melody. Both of them said :

Do you want State or Opera? Here you have State and Opera: the only kinds there are.

125. With Rossini, the history of Opera came, properly speaking, to an end. It was at an end from the moment that the unconscious seed had

been developed into the condition of evident conscious fullness, the musician becoming the absolute factor of this art-work with unlimited power, and the taste of the theatre-going public accepted as the only guide for its dispositions. It was at an end from the moment that all ostensible show of drama, even at the sacrifice of principle, had been practically thrown away, the singers given to understand that ear-pleasing vocal execution was their sole consideration, and their irrefutable right acknowledged to base hereupon their requirements from the composer. It was at an end from the moment that the entire music-world accepted melodies, devoid of character, as the whole content of music, regarded a mere faggot-bunch of opera music-numbers as the only dovetailing required by musical form, and deemed the narcotic intoxication of an opera evening to be the extent of effect of which music was capable. It was at an end on the day when a composer who was being made a god of by all Europe, and had been installed in the most gorgeous position of luxury—that is to say, Rossini—thought it seemly to pay a state-visit to Beethoven, that reserved, hermit-like and morose composer, who was often thought to be half-mad—a visit which the latter did not return.

126. What must the roving glance of that luxurious son of Italia have embraced, as it became, involuntarily, fixed by the gloomy lustre of the glance of his incomprehensible rival—with its tale of being broken with pain, faint with yearning, and yet ready to face death? Did those wild locks of hair of the Medusa-head appear before

it—those fearful locks, to behold which was to die?

All that is certain is—that Opera died with Rossini.

---

#### THE TRANSITION TO MEYERBEER.

127. From out the great city of Paris, in which the most cultured connoisseurs and critics, even to **State of Operatic Affairs at Meyerbeer's Appearance.** this day, cannot see what further difference there can be between two celebrated composers, such as Beethoven and Rossini, except that the latter employed his heavenly genius in the composition of opera, whilst the former wrote only symphonies—from out this splendid stronghold of modern musical wisdom, notwithstanding the foregoing, there was destined to come the wherewithal for a marvellous prolongation of the opera's life.

128. The desire for continued existence is the strongest force in everything which has being. The opera had a being after the manner of the Byzantine Empire; and, as this lasted, so it will also last, as long as the unnatural conditions remain in evidence which enable it, though inwardly dead, to cling to life. And this will go on until, finally, the savage Turks appear; who once, as we know, put an end to the Byzantine Empire, and went so far, in their coarseness, as to use the magnificent and holy Church of St. Sophia as a stable for wild horses.

129. When Spontini considered that with him the opera was about to die, he made a mistake, because he did not discriminate between the dramatic tendency of the opera and its real being;

**The** besides which he overlooked the possi-  
**Chagrin of** bility of a Rossini, who could have  
**Rossini at** completely convinced him of the con-  
**Meyerbeer's** trary. Rossini was much more in the  
**Success.** right in considering that Opera concluded with him; though he, also, was in error. It is true that he had recognised the nature of Opera, presented it openly and brought it into general acceptance; and was, therefore, justified in assuming that, though his works might be still imitated, they could not be surpassed. But, on the other hand, he, in his turn, also fell into the error of overlooking that, out of all the opera tendencies which had ever prevailed, a caricature might not only be patched up and accepted by the people at large, but also actually acknowledged by the intellects devoted to art-criticism, as a new and essential operatic form.

130. At the time of his greatest glory Rossini could not possibly know that those bankers, for whom he had hitherto made music, would one day beget the notion of taking up to composition themselves.

Oh!—how this master, though otherwise so light-hearted, must have chafed—and how angry and ill-disposed he must have become, to see himself surpassed! Not surpassed in geniality, but, at least, in the display of skilfulness for exploiting the worthlessness of public art! How truly he thus became the “dissoluto punito”; the discarded

mistress; and, with what a fearful disgust he must have been filled when he told the Paris opera-director, who had requested him to fill up a slight lull which had occurred, by blowing-out something else for the Parisians, that he would not come back until :

The Jews had finished their Sabbath !

131. He had to experience, however, that, as long as God's wisdom rules the world, punishment awaits everything; and even the sincerity with which he had told people what was the case with opera had to be expiated by his becoming fishmonger and church-composer !

But we have a much longer road to travel before we attain to an intelligible exposition of the nature of this newest phase of Opera.

## CHAPTER III.

### EPITOME:

(132) The course of the opera since Rossini. (133) All interest centred in melody. (134) The melody of Gluck and Spontini. (135) Operatic conditions prevailing in their day. (136) Musician becomes principal factor in Opera as the result of Rossini. (137) Features of a nobler kind of melody. (138) The independence-aspiration in politics and music compared. (139) The new movement really a restoration with mistaken hopes. (140) The national tendency in Opera. (141) Seductiveness of this tendency. (142) The national feeling in politics corresponding to the general feeling of melodic expression. (143) The deficiency of Rossini's melody as viewed by Weber. (144) The latter's concentration upon folk-song. (145) His disappointment. (146) Impossibility of transplanting folk-song. (147) How folk-song is now replaced. (148) The harmonic element integral to German folk-song. (149) German folk-song the foundation of Weber's melody. (150) The fullness of folk-tune expression in Weber's hands. (151) Weber became principal factor in his opera on account of libretto being specially written to meet the requirements of his melody. (152) Resemblances and differences between the case of "Der Freischütz" and "Tancredi" and their respective poems. (153) The example which Weber had provided for other composers. (154) The French composers and the "couplet." (155) The couplet and the contredanse. (156) The relation of French opera to vaudeville. (157) The prevailing conditions in France at this period and the difficulties presented to French composers. (158) The folk-song exploration campaign. (159) Auber in Italy. (160) The origin of "Masaniello." (161) "Masaniello" and the drama. (162) The origin of "William Tell." (163) The mania for national melody at its height. (164) The German critic in his glory. (165) Effect upon Opera of the national element. (166) Artistic use of the folk-element necessitates its remaining free. (167) The German critic and his "aspirations for higher characteristic beauty." (168) Inability of the composer to catch the real folk-element. (169) The altered relation of the constituents of opera.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE OPERA OF POPULAR MELODY.

132. SINCE Rossini, the history of Opera, in the main, is no longer anything else than the history of the operatic melody, from two standpoints; from that of art-speculation, the history of its significance; and from that of performances with attendant greediness for "effects," the history of its mode of delivery.

133. The colossal success of Rossini's proceedings had diverted the attention of composers from the search for the dramatic content of the aria; as well as from the attempt to conceive, for it, coherent and dramatic significance. It was the inquiry into the nature of melody itself, as the result of the whole fabric of the aria, which now occupied alike the instinct and speculation of the composer. It could not fail to be perceived that, even in the arias of Gluck and his followers, the public had only found entertainment, so far as the general feeling indicated by the text had received expression in the purely *melodic* portion of those airs; and that this further manifested itself, generally, in the form of absolute and delightful tune.

134. This element of tune is, already with Gluck, completely evident; but, in the case of Spontini, the last of his followers, it positively craves our notice. All these earnest dramatic composers had, more or less, deceived themselves when they attributed the effect of their music less to the melodic essence of its arias than to the realisation of the dramatic purpose with which they had invested them.

135. In their day the opera-theatre, especially in Paris, was the forum of æsthetic talents, as well as that of a distinguished world which prided itself on being no less æsthetic and talented. The earnest æsthetic intention of these masters was received by this public with respect; and the halo of the artistic law-giver was conferred upon the musicians who undertook to write the drama in *tones*; whilst the public hushed itself into the belief that it was smitten with dramatic "declamation"; whilst, all the while, it was simply charmed by the grace of the aria melody.

136. But when the public, emancipated by Rossini, could openly and unreservedly perceive this, the establishment of a totally undeniable truth was thereby involved; and the justification of a perfectly logical and natural manifestation was thereby made complete. This was that, whenever the music is made the principal consideration, not only in respect of the exterior proposition adopted but also in that of the entire artistic disposition of the artwork, the merely auxiliary art of poetry, together with every dramatic intention thereby implied, must remain ineffective and of no purport; and that, on

the other hand, to music alone must be allotted the duty of realising effect, by virtue of its own powers. Any attempt to show itself dramatic and characteristic could only disturb the true nature of music, which finds its utterance in melody alone, as the expression of universal feeling; and this must happen as soon as music seeks to act alone in the attainment of a higher object, instead of only helping and co-operating.

137. All opera-composers could perceive this, from Rossini's undeniable success; and, if any reply was open at all to musicians of deeper feeling, it could only be that, in addition to the character of the Rossini-melody being flimsy and disagreeable, it did not, in the main, exhaust the resources of melody. To such musicians, the artistic purpose was bound to appeal, of giving to this undeniably omnipotent melody that entire expression of beautiful human feeling which is proper to it in the most primitive sense; and, accordingly, in the attempt to solve this problem, they went beyond the question of the opera's nature and origin right back to the fountain-head out of which the aria, in its turn, had derived an artificial life, until they arrived at the restoration of the primitive tune of the original folk-song.

## WEBER.

138. A German musician was the first, and was exceptionally successful, in calling this new transformation of melody into life.

Carl Maria von Weber reached his artistic maturity at a time in historic development in which the impulse towards freedom was less evident in individual men than in the nations as masses. The independence-aspiration which, in politics, had not yet acquired the signification of what was inherent to humanity, and which did not, therefore, yet stand for any absolute and unconditional human-independence, endeavoured, as if mysteriously to itself and as if aroused more by accident than by necessity, to make out a case for its justification, and believed that this was presented by the racial origin of the various nations.

139. The movement thus resulting really partook more of the character of a restoration than of a revolution; and, in its extremest phase, aspired to be no more than an attempt to restore what was old, and had been lost. It is only recently that we have acquired the knowledge of how calculated is this error to lead to new impediments in the development of real freedom for humanity. But the same cause by which we have been obliged to learn this has driven us, with full knowledge, into the right road, with a force which is painful, truly, but healing in its effect.

140. It is far from my intention here to explain

the progress of Opera as standing in relation to a political development—a project which offers too favourite a field for the display of arbitrary fancy for such beginnings to do otherwise than lead to indulgence in the most absurd wanderings; as, in fact, has already happened in reference to this subject, in the most disedifying manner. It appears to me far more greatly serviceable to bring full explanation to bear upon what is unnatural and contradictory in this department of art; as well as its obvious incapability, by its own unaided nature, to attain to its proposed object. The national tendency, however, as exhibited in the treatment of melody, has too much in common with the errors of our political development during the last forty years for this relation to be passed over in silence; considering its purport, its wanderings, and, finally, its separations and unfruitfulness; all of which not only become continually more evident, but also tend to conviction of its fundamental error.

141. In art, as in politics, what distinguishes this tendency is that its fundamental error appears in its original spontaneity with a seductive beauty; though, in its later phase of **The National Tendency**, arrogance exclusively given to selfish ends, it appears with a disgusting hatefulness. It was beautiful all the while it was the moved spirit of freedom which therein sought speech; but, now that the spirit of freedom, in truth, has already exposed it, and only vulgar egotism holds it artificially together, it has become hateful.

142. In music, the national tendency appeared

with so much the more actual beauty, as the character of music, in the main, appears more to general, than to specific, feeling. That which with our romantic poets took the forms of Roman Catholic mystic eye-language and feudal-knightly love-service assumed, in music, that of tune which was homely and sincere, and delivered with breathings deep and broad, as well as possessed of a noble charm: tune which seemed as if it had been listened to as, in reality, the last sigh of the departing folk-spirit.

143. The transcendantly lovable tone-poet of "Der Freischütz" was cut to the depth of his pure feeling and artistic nature by the sensual **Weber and the** melodies of Rossini, in which the whole **Volkslied.** world delighted. He could not admit that, in them, the true fountain of melody was to be sought; and he felt impelled to prove to the world that they formed only an impure outpour, from this fountain; but that the true source, when we once knew where to find it, still flowed on with untroubled clearness.

144. The distinguished founders of opera had only passingly listened to folk-song, but now Weber's whole attention was concentrated upon it. Whilst the fragrance of the folk-flower of the meadow only reached the magnificent chambers of the luxurious music-world, in order to be distilled into portable scents, the longing for a sight of the flower itself drove Weber out of the stately saloon away to the green fields. There he found it, at the spring of the cheerily-running brook, between powerfully-scented grasses, on wonderfully-clustered

moss, and amongst the rustling branches of the old forest-trees. How the heart-beat of the artist quickened at the sight; and at the inspiration of the fullness of so much fragrance! His love could not resist the impetus thus given to it to bring this life-giving fragrance—this health-giving vision, to his nerveless fellow-men in relief of their madness; and to pluck the flower itself from the wild which gave it god-like nurture, in order to hold it up, as the all-saving means, for a sensual world in need of blessing.

145. He plucked it—the unhappy man! High in the halls of splendour, then, he set the sweetly modest bloom in a precious vase. Daily he moistened it with fresh water from the fountain in the wood. Yet—see! The leaves, so chastely closed before, now open wide; shamelessly the flower displays its noble stamens, offering them with fearful indifference to the sniffing nose of every swindling libertine.

What ails thee, flower?

exclaims the master, with soul-felt agony.

Dost thou forget the beautiful green fields—the scene of all thy early innocence?

146. The flowers all, now, one after the other, begin to cast their leaves; weary and withered they scatter upon the carpet, and one last breath of their sweet fragrance whispers to the master:

I die because thou plucked'st me!

And, with the flowers, the master also died; for the flower had been his art, and his art his mysterious hold on life. No more did flowers grow upon the wood-meadow! Tyrolese singers might come from the Alps to sing before Prince Metternich, to be afterwards recommended by him to all the courts, and for all the lords and bankers to amuse themselves in their reeking saloons at the merry jodling of these Alpine youngsters, and at their singing about the "Dierndel" of their love.

147. Now, those very same youngsters are marching to strains of Bellini's melody to the murder of their brethren. Now, they dance with their "Dierndel" to tunes taken from Donizetti's operas. For—the flower bloomed no more!

148. It is a characteristic trait of German folk-tune that it inclines less to rhythms which are short, bold and brisk, than to those which are of slow pulsation; and which, though gay, present the feature of a longing which **The German Volkslied.** gradually increases. A German song, entirely without harmony, is by us not to be thought of; as, everywhere, it may be heard with at least two voices; art seeming spontaneously to intervene to supply the bass, as well as the easily-added middle-part, so as not to lose sight of the complete structure of the harmonic melody.

149. This melody is the foundation of Weber's folk-opera; it is free from all strictly national peculiarities full of a broad and universal expression, and devoid of all other adornment than the merri-  
ment of sweetly natural sincerity; whilst, by means of its unadulterated grace, it speaks powerfully to



the hearts of men no matter to what nationality they may happen to belong simply because, in it, the purely human comes so untaintedly to the surface. May we succeed in recognising the nature of the genuine German spirit and its presumable destiny better in the world-wide effectiveness of the Weber melody than we can do in the falsehood presented by its specific shades of character!

150. Weber forms everything upon this melody. That which, while completely filled with it, he **Weber's** retains and gives back again; that which, **Musical** throughout the entire structure of the **Material.** opera, he recognises as capable of being expressed in it, or which he is able to render so, even though it be only application of its breath or of dewdrops from the chalice of the flower; all is equally bound to be brought by him to an ample, true and striking issue.

151. This melody it was which Weber made the factor of his opera. The progress of the drama found, in it, so far its natural realisation, that, in its entirety, and from its first inception, the drama had, as it were, been inspired by the longing to be taken up by this melody; to be by it consumed, to be in it dissolved, and to be through it finally justified.

152. If we look at "Der Freischütz," as a drama, in this light we must allot precisely the same relation to its poem, as towards Weber's music, as we should give to the poem of "Tancredi," as towards that of Rossini. Rossini's melody decided the character of the poem of Tancredi precisely in the same way as Weber's melody decided the char-

acter of Kind's "Der Freischütz"; and, in the one case, Weber was nothing different from what Rossini was in the other, except that Weber was noble and sensible whereas Rossini was frivolous and senseful.\* Weber only opened his arms to the reception of the drama the wider in proportion to the degree with which his melody spoke the true language of the heart, pure and untainted. Whatever was wafted up into it was well protected and secure from all defacement. That which, in consequence of the limitations of this language, could not be expressed in it notwithstanding all its truthfulness even Weber had to strive long for in vain; and his halting amounts, for us, to a frank acknowledgment of the incapacity of music, by itself, to constitute the drama—or, to be more precise, to absorb the genuine drama, as distinct from that which is merely cut and dried to suit her purpose; in lieu of which it is music herself, which, according to any correct reasoning, has to be taken up by the drama proper.

---

\* What I desire to imply by "sinnlich," in opposition to the sensuousness which I apply to the realising moment of the art-work, may be gathered from the exclamation of an Italian crowd: "God bless the knife!" by way of expressing their delight at the singing of a castrato. (Original note.)

## AUBER.

153. We have now to proceed with the history of melody.

In tracing back melody to its original folk-source, and in discovering, in the German folk-source, the happy quality of simple sincerity unattended by the restraint of national peculiarities, Weber had led opera composers generally to a fountain-head; to which they everywhere turned, investigating it to their utmost, as a spring likely to prove by no means unproductive.

**The Progress of Melody after Weber.**

154. In the first place came the French composers, who bestowed their special care upon preparation of the herb which stood conveniently to hand, as a native plant. The witty or sentimental couplet had already for a length of time been in favour upon their folk-stage, in the ordinary drama. Its nature indicating it as more suitable for the lighter moods or, if ever for sentimental at all events never for either passionate or tragic expression, it follows that, quite by itself, it shows the character of dramatic style for which in application it is most calculated.

155. The Frenchman is not constituted in such a way as to allow his entire feelings to be conveyed in music. When his emotion rises high enough to seek musical expression, he is obliged to reserve the right to speak; or at least to dance, also. His idea is that the conclusion of the couplet is the beginning of the

**French Musical Traits.**

contre-danse; without which there is no music for him. His idea of the couplet, also, is that speech is so thoroughly the first consideration that he can only sing it alone, and not with others; because, otherwise, the words would not be so clearly understood. In the contre-danse, moreover, the dancers stand, for the most part, singly, opposite one another, each one doing what he has to do quite alone; and claspings of each pair being reserved for moments of the dance which render them completely necessary.

156. In the French vaudeville everything appertaining to the musical disposition exists, therefore, in detached items, side by side, joined only by means of a gossiping kind of prose; and, where the couplet is sung by several voices together, this is done in the most painful musical unison possible to conceive. French opera is this vaudeville in extended form; the broader musical disposition in it being taken, as to form, from the so-called dramatic opera; and, as to contents, from the executorial element, which received its most luxurious significance at the hands of Rossini.

157. The peculiar bloom of this kind of opera is, and always has remained, the couplet, rather spoken than sung; and its musical essence the rhythmical melody of the contre-danse. As soon as the French composers perceived, on the one hand, the decadence of the Spontini kind of opera, and, on the other, the universal attraction presented by that of Rossini; but, particularly, the emotional influence of

**French  
Operatic  
Material.**

Weber's melody, they returned to the kind of opera which had been nationally produced, and which had never thoroughly applied itself to absorption of the dramatic aim with which it had merely proceeded simultaneously. The living element in that French national product had already disappeared; vaudeville and comic opera having so long drawn upon it that its dried-up source could no longer be made to flow. Where musical artists, searching for natural expression, tried to discern the ripple of the brook, the prosaic clip-clap of the mill prevented them; that very mill, the wheel of which was driven by water which they, themselves, had conducted to it through wooden channels, away from its own natural bed. Where they wanted to hear the people sing, only the sound of their loathsome and well-known vaudeville machine-manufactures reached their ear.

158. That was when the great hunt after folk-melody, in the lands of foreigners, began. Weber, himself, finding the native flower wither in his hand, had already assiduously explored Forkel's descriptions of Arabian music; and taken from them a March for Watchers of the Harem. Still more spry upon their legs, our Frenchmen simply searched the tourist-handbooks; and betook themselves to the places wherever a piece of folk-simplicity was to be met with, in order to be close at hand, both to hear how it sounded, and to see how things looked. Our civilisation, grown old, had become again childish; and, when old men grow childish, their death is near at hand!

159. There, in the lovely but much-soiled land of Italy, the musical fat of which Rossini had used **Rivalry of** up in such genteel comfort for the **Rossini** famishing art-world, the thoughtlessly **and Auber.** luxuriating master sat looking on with a smile of surprise at the cribbing going on round about him by the gallant huntsmen after folk-melodies who had come from Paris. One of these was a good rider, and when, after a hasty course, he got down from his horse, one might easily conclude that he had found a good melody, destined to bring him money. This rider now rode madly through all the fish and vegetable stock of Naples market, dispersing everything round about, with a cloud of words and mingled curses following him, and with threatening fists raised as he approached; causing him, with lightning swiftness, to sniff the idea of a fine revolution of fish and vegetable market-people.

160. But this was a case for more profit than that! Away to Portici hurried the Parisian horseman; on to the fishing-boats and nets of those simple fishermen, who sing there; who catch fish, and sleep, and then quarrel; who play with their wives and children, and then throw knives and kill one another; but who sing all the time. Ah! master Auber!—confess: that was a good ride. It was better than one on that Hyppogryph, who is always striding into the air, from which nothing could be got but colds and snuffles. So, the rider rode back again; and, dismounting, made his extra-gracious compliment to Rossini (he knew very well why!) took extra-post to Paris, and what he there turned

out off-hand was no other than "Masaniello"; or, the dumb girl of Portici.

161. This dumb girl was really the muse of drama struck speechless; and, in helpless grief and overwhelmed with trouble, wandering alone between singing and raging crowds; only, at last, to suffocate herself in the manufactured rage of a theatrical volcanic eruption! . . .

162. Rossini viewed the splendid spectacle from the distance; and, whilst journeying to Paris, he took it into his head to make a slight sojourn among the Swiss Alps, just to listen to the way in which the sturdy fellows there, with their mountains and their cows, used to amuse themselves musically. Arrived in Paris, he made his extra-gracious compliment to Auber (he knew very well why!) and, with much paternal joy, presented the world with the child which had just been born; and which he had the happy inspiration of baptising in the name of "William Tell."

163. "Masaniello" and "William Tell" now became the axis round which, henceforth, the entire speculative opera-music world revolved. **Revival of Interest in National Feature of Opera.** A new secret had been discovered—that of how to re-vivify the half-corrupt body of the opera; which by its means might now continue to live as long as national peculiarities for exploitation could be found.

Every country of the Continent was explored; every province stripped; the last drop of musical blood extracted from every race; and the spirit thereby obtained squandered in dazzling fireworks

for the pleasure of the lords and traffickers of the great opera-world.

164. The German art-critic, however, recognised this as an important approach of opera to its object; for it had now struck out in a "national"—and it might even be said in an "historical"—direction. It is when the whole world loses its head that the Germans feel happiest—because they have, then, so much more occasion to meditate, to solve, to reason, and, last of all—by way of feeling quite happy—to classify.

165. Let us consider in what the effect consisted which was now produced by the national element upon melody; and, through it, upon the opera.

166. The folk-element, when allowed to remain free of all reflection and thus to raise itself by natural growth to the level of the art-production, has always been the fructifying source of all art. In society, as in art, we have taken our nourishment from the people without knowing it. In extreme separation from the people, we held the fruit upon which we lived to be manna; sent for us, wealthy and gifted ones, as the privileged and elect of God, and as falling by divine ordination from the air into our very mouths. The manna being all consumed, we cast a greedy glance around, at the fruit trees growing upon the earth. Then, as robbers by the grace of God, we stripped these of their fruits, with a thievish effrontery, and without troubling whether we had either planted, or tended them. We even pulled up the trees themselves to their very roots, in order to find whether, by skilful preparation, these might not be rendered



palatable, or, at all events, capable of being swallowed. We have, in this way, so treated the people's natural forest, that now, even with it, we stand in the position of beggars; unclothed and famishing.

167. This is just what was done by opera-music. As soon as it became conscious that it had lost all

**Misuse of the Volks-  
lied in  
Opera.** productive power, and that its sap was dried-up within it, it pounced upon the folk-song, sucking it dry to the very roots; and, now, it throws back to the plundered people the fibrous remnant of the fruit, in the shape of repulsive opera-melodies, as miserable, unwholesome nourishment. But, even the latter has no prospect of being replenished. It has swallowed everything it could; yet, without some possible means of fructification, it must become barren and fall to the ground. It is now gnawing at itself, with the agony of a dying glutton; and this horrible picking at itself is called by the German art-critics "aspirations for higher characteristic beauty"—which is about on par with their baptising the act of knocking down the people's fruit-trees, after they had been robbed, as the "Emancipation of the Masses."

168. The opera-composer has not been able to catch the real folk-element. In order to do that he, himself, would have had to act in the spirit, and from the point of view of the people; in other words, he would have had to identify himself with the people. He could only seize upon what, being peculiar, revealed to him the peculiarity of the folk-element; and this is what is called "national." The

**The  
Composer's  
Disabilities  
in applying  
Folk-Song.**

national tints of colour, having been obliterated from the minds of the higher ranks, now survived only among the classes, who, being unable to quit either the field, the sea coast, or the mountain, were thus withdrawn from all profitable barter of their characteristics.

Only that which had become stiff and stereotyped fell therefore into the hands of those pillagers; and, in those hands, habited as they were to the still more wanton capriciousness of mutilating every trace of the most delicate features, it could not become anything beyond a mere fashionable curiosity. After the manner of fashion in clothing, in which any foreign trait relating to neglected items of popular costume is applied at will to outlandish trimmings, so, in the opera, single features of melody and rhythm, detached from the main life current of secluded nationalities, were fixed upon the decked-out carcase of superannuated and empty forms.

169. A not unimportant influence upon the general bearings of opera, and one into which we have now more closely to inquire, was obliged, however, to accrue from this procedure. The point for us is—the altered relationship of the constituents of operatic representation to one another; and this, as we have already seen, is taken to be an—"Emanicipation of the Masses."



## CHAPTER IV.

### EPITOME.

(170) The origin of drama. (171) The relation of the art-work to the people in Greek tragedy. (172) Absence of the chorus in the Shakespeare tragedy with greater individuality of subordinate characters. (173) Tendency of the State to treat classes as uniform and its influence upon the drama. (174) The empty character or "Prince and Princess" foundation of opera. (175) The relation of the opera chorus to "Prince and Princess." (176) The opera dependent upon scenic apparatus. (177) Contrast with the use of adornments by former composers. (178) The same illustrated by Mozart's use of national colouring for Osmin and Figaro. (179) The use of auxiliary effects by modern composers described. (180) The degraded representation of the people in modern opera. (181) The "emancipation of the masses" and the "unisono" of the modern opera chorus. (182) Illustration afforded by Meyerbeer's "Huguenots." (183) The necessity created for resort to "historical costume." (184) Duty of sustaining life for the opera falls upon the musician. (185) The composer as the sole factor of opera to the practical exclusion of the poet. (186) Injury to genuine musical expression caused by its bearing the dramatic responsibility. (187) The composer's relations to the theatrical tailor and scene-painter. (188) "Historical music" and the German art-critic. (189) The composer's difficulty in inaugurating a distinctively historical style. (190) The compulsory draw upon religious music for purposes of the theatre. (191) The state of the case as illustrated by Meyerbeer. (192) The relation of religious musical material to historical costume. (193) The requirements of "Prince and Princess" necessitate a background position for religion on the stage. (194) Eccentricity of style resulting from this necessity. (195) This eccentric style in opposition to true musical expression. (196) The new resort to the mode of expression of former musical periods. (197) The musical jargon resulting from promiscuous association of mannerisms. (198) The creation of a relation between music and fashion. (199) Historical music the cause of resort to further expedient. (200) The origin of the "neo-romantic."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PEOPLE AS REPRESENTED IN OPERA.

170. EVERY movement in art approaches its highest development in precise proportion to the degree in which it attains to the power of clear, concise and reliable form. **The Natural Folk Aspiration.** The people, after expressing, by means of exclamations of lyric ecstasy, their astonishment at the widely-working wonders of nature, proceed, in order to appease the object of their marvel, to elevate it, by idealisation, to the rank of god; and finally, to that of hero. In this hero, as in a concentrated portrayal of its own nature, it recognises itself. It celebrates the hero's deeds in epics; but it reproduces them itself in drama. The tragic hero of the Greeks strode out from amongst the chorus; to whom, turning back, he cried:

See! It is thus that a man acts and behaves! That which you were celebrating in sayings and proverbs, I represent visibly for you as undeniably true and necessary.

171. The tragedy of the Greeks, with its chorus

and heroes bound the public and the art-work together; the latter exhibiting to the Greek and Shakespearean people, not only itself, but also its judgment upon itself, as a poetic view; and the drama, as an art-work, ripened in precisely the same degree as the instructive comment of the chorus, on the doings of the heroes, was so unmistakably expressed, as to enable the chorus to step down from the stage to mix amongst the people; becoming themselves, in this way, helpful participators in vivifying the action, as such.

172. The tragedy of Shakespeare stands incontestably above that of the Greeks; in the sense that it has succeeded in dispensing with the necessity of the chorus, for purposes of technique. Shakespeare accomplishes this by means of sheer personal participation in the action on the part of subordinate characters; who act for themselves, and entirely from the individual necessities caused by their opinions and situations; just as the principal hero. Even their apparent subordination in the artistic framework consists only in remoter points of contact between them and the principal hero, and does not at all proceed from any technical depreciation, on principle, of characters which are subordinate; for, wherever the most unimportant personage shares in the main action, he expresses himself in a perfectly free manner, according to his personal characteristics.

173. If, in the progress of modern dramatic art, the sharply delineated characters of Shakespeare went on losing more and more of their plastic individuality, until nothing remained but the unavoid-

able character-masks devoid of all individuality, this is to be ascribed to the tendency of the State to treat each class as uniform, and to suppress the right of free individuality, with more and more deadly power.

174. It was the shadowy play of such intrinsically hollow character-masks, devoid of all originality,

**Dramatic  
Foundation  
of the  
Opera.** which became the dramatic foundation of the opera. The more empty the characters presented by these masks, the more suitable they were deemed for

singing the operatic aria. "Prince and Princess"—that is the entire dramatic axis upon which the opera turned; and upon which, if we look closely, we shall find that it still turns. Anything of an individual nature could only accrue to these opera-masks by outward application; so that, at last, scenic local features had to make up for any deficiencies which had come for good. When, at last, composers had exhausted the melodic productiveness of our art, and been obliged to borrow local melody from the people, they also seized the entire locality itself; involving special scenery and dresses, besides a form of surrounding which was capable of motion; namely, the opera chorus.

175. This opera chorus became, at last, the opera itself; the object of which was to throw, from all sides, its glittering light on the "Prince and Princess"; so as to sustain these poor creatures in their coloured-up singing-life.

176. Thus, the opera's circular course had, to its

deadly shame, been fulfilled. The individual characters, in favour of which the original chorus of the people had made way, now subsided into a gaudy clumsy surrounding, without any central point of interest. This surrounding assumed, in the opera, the form of an entire and horrible scenic apparatus; which, with its machines, its painted cloth and its gaudy dresses seems, in the voice of the chorus, to cry out :

“I am I; and there is no Opera but me!”

177. It is true that former noble artists had made use of the adornment afforded by the national element; but it had only resulted in the exercise of real charm when added as an occasional set-off to dramatic material, already enlivened by characteristic action; and when managed entirely without ostentation.

178. How thoroughly Mozart understood how to give his Osmin and Figaro a national colouring; without seeking for the requisite tint in either Turkey or Spain, or even in books. That Osmin, and that Figaro were, however, real, individual characters; happily thrown off by the poet, furnished with true expression by the musician, and bound to prove successful in the hands of the competent actor, who could do no otherwise than give them faithful interpretation.

179. The auxiliary effects of a national kind indulged in by our modern composers of opera are not applied to such individualities; as they have, in the first place, to give to that which, being in itself quite devoid of character, requires some sort of



characteristic basis in order to enliven and justify its inherently indifferent and colourless existence. From the very first, that point to which everything genuinely appertaining to the folk-nature tends, viz., the purely human characteristic, was misused in our opera, as a colourless, meaningless aria singer's mask; and it is now necessary to enliven this mask on account of the reflection of the prevailing tint—which will also account for the necessity of this tint being carried out in the surroundings with a crudity of the most glaring and blotchy kind.

180. In order to impart some life to the desert scene round about the aria singer, they have now **The Opera** introduced upon the stage the people **Chorus**. themselves whose melody has been appropriated. But, these are naturally not the people with whom that melody originated, but a mass drilled to march, hither and thither, in accordance with the beat of the opera aria. They did not want the people, but the mass; or, in other words, the material residue of the people, after their life-spirit had been extracted. The massive chorus of our modern opera is nothing else than the scene-machinery of the theatre, trained to march and sing: the dumb glitter of the coulisse, transformed into noisy motion. With the best will in the world, "Prince and Princess" had nothing more to say than what was comprised by their ornamental airs; which had been heard a thousand times. At last, they tried to vary the theme by the whole theatre, down to the last hundredth chorister, joining in the singing of this air from the coulisse; when, the higher the effect required, the number of parts is not accordingly

increased; for it is simply a question of a roaring unison.

181. In the "unisono," which is nowadays so celebrated, the real drift of this idea about the application of masses is quite obviously revealed; and, from the operatic point of view, we hear these masses quite correctly "emancipated" when they sing, as they do in the most celebrated situations of the most celebrated modern operas, the old threshed-out air with a hundred-voiced unison. ~~It~~ It is in this way that our modern State "emancipates" the masses when it marches them off in battalions and in soldier's uniform; or, when it makes them turn right and left, and present or shoulder arms.

182. So, when Meyerbeer's "Huguenots" raise themselves to their highest pitch, they enable us precisely to hear what a Prussian battalion of the guards enables us to see; and what German critics, as before mentioned, are pleased to call: "Emancipation of the Masses."

---

#### HISTORICAL MUSIC.

183. The surrounding "emancipated" in this way was, however, strictly speaking, in its turn, only another mask; and if really characteristic life was not forthcoming in the principal characters of the opera, so much the less could it be infused into the working masses. The reflection designed by this array of means to be cast in an enlivening manner upon the

**Need for the  
Effect of  
Historical  
Costume.**

principal characters could, therefore, only be of any particularly decided effect when the exterior of surroundings were furbished up in some way from outside, sufficiently to disguise their inner hollowness.

This furbishing effect was obtained by the use of historic costume, which was told off to render the national colouring more striking.

184. It would seem natural, here, to assume that, by this union with historic motive, the duty of **Continued** deciding in all that concerns the form of **Subjection** the opera would now be obliged to be **of the Poet.** confided to the poet. We may, however, easily perceive our error if we remember the course which the progress of opera had taken up to now; how, in all phases of its development, we had only to thank the despairing efforts of the musician artificially to keep his work alive; and how, even the application of historic motive arose, not through any recognised desirability of submitting himself to the poet, but through the pressure of purely musical circumstances; a pressure which, in its turn, arose as a consequence of the musician's unnatural object of himself giving to the drama both intention and expression.

185. Later on, we propose to return to the position occupied by the poet towards our newest form of opera. For the moment, we proceed uninterruptedly from the standpoint of the actual factor of opera—the musician; and shall follow him wherever his mistaken endeavours are obliged to lead him.

186. The musician, who might behave as seemed

to him best, and yet could give only expression, and  
**Futility** nothing but expression, was obliged to  
**of the** lose even the power of providing this  
**Musician's** very expression in a true and healthy  
**Mistaken** manner, in precisely the same degree that,  
**Endeavour.** in his perverted zeal to present and form by himself  
the object of expression, he degraded that object to  
the level of a fundamentally flat and empty scheme.  
Since he had not asked the poet to furnish him with  
men, but had only requested automata from the  
mechanician in order that he might, by draping them  
with flowing garments, according to taste, be able to  
charm solely by means of pleasurable tints and the  
disposition of their folds, he was compelled, when  
he found that he could not possibly represent the  
warm pulsation of the human body by means of  
such automata, and in view of the continually in-  
creasing impoverishment of his means of expression,  
to have recourse, at last, to strange and manifold  
variations of these tints and folds.

187. Historical dress in opera—most fruitful in  
effect because of the opportunities of variety afforded  
**The Scene** by it in respect of differences of period  
**Painter's** and climate, is, however, strictly speak-  
**and** ing, only the business of the theatrical  
**Costumier's** tailor and scene-painter; both of which  
**Vocation** factors have, in truth, become modern  
**in Opera.** opera-composers—most important colleagues. The  
musician did not, however, omit to prepare the  
palette of his tone-tints for historical costume.  
Should he, the creator of opera, he who had already  
made the poet his servant, not be able to outstrip  
the painter and the tailor? Should he, who had

melted the entire drama with all its action and characters into music, find it impossible to liquify the drawings and tints of the painter and tailor into musical water? He was able to break down all dams and to open all sluices which divided the sea from the land; thus drowning the drama in the sin-flood of his music—man and mouse, pencil and shears.

188. The musician was further obliged, however, to fulfil the duty to which he had been predestined by gratifying the German critic (for whom, as everybody knows, art was expressly created by God's benevolent providence) with the gift of a specially historical music. His calling soon inspired him to find the right way for doing this.

189. How must music which is historical sound, if it is to have its right effect? It is clear, at all events, that it should sound different from music which is not historical. But in what does the difference consist? Obviously, in the fact that historical music must differ from what is now in vogue; as the costume of a previous period differs from that of the present day. Would not the wisest plan be, therefore, precisely as we had copied the costume of the period in question, to copy also its music? Unfortunately, this was easier said than done; for, at the time when costume was so striking, barbarous as it may seem, there was not yet any opera; so that no possibility existed of taking any general operatic mode of speech from that.

190. On the other hand, people used to sing in the churches then; and those church songs have,

**The  
Historical  
Trait in  
Music.**

nowadays, when suddenly introduced, the effect, in comparison with our music, of something surprisingly uncommon. Excellent! Let us have these church songs! Religion will have to take a turn at the theatre! Thus, the necessity for a musical, historical costume became a Christian religious opera-virtue; and, for the crime of robbing folk-melody, a Roman Catholic and Evangelical Protestant church-absolution was obtained, in return for the benefit conferred upon the church, seeing that, just as the masses had already been "emancipated," so now (to keep to the German critic's manner of expressing himself) religion was to be "emancipated" by the opera.

191. In this way, the opera-composer became the saviour of the world; and, in any case, we must accept the profound spiritual endowment, the enthusiastic zeal and the self-torture of that irrepressibly ecstatic Meyerbeer as that of a lamb of God—a modern redeemer—bearing the weight of all our sins.

192. This redeeming emancipation of the church could, nevertheless, be only carried out conditionally by the musician. Assuming religion to be willing to be blest by opera, it must, necessarily, put up with having, in a certain reasonable way, to take up its proper place with other recipients of "emancipation." It was for the opera, as emancipator of the world, to lord it over religion, and not for religion to do so over opera; yet, in the event of the opera house becoming a church, it would not be religion that was emancipated by the opera, but the latter which was

**Religious  
Music as  
Operatic  
Material.**

freed by religion. So far as the musical, historical costume was concerned, the opera would, in any case, have preferred to have to do only with religion, considering that the only applicable historical music was to be found in the church song.

193. To be exclusively mixed up with monks and parsons, however, would considerably affect the cheerfulness of opera; and, after all, all that had to be ennobled by this emancipation of religion was the opera aria—that curious seed from which the entire being of opera had sprung, and which by no means resulted from any desire for devotional concentration, but from that for entertainment and diversion. Truth to tell, religion was to be simply the *hors d'œuvre*, as usual in a well ordered manner of living; the principal dish remaining, as heretofore, “Prince and Princess,” set off by suitable auxiliary effects from villains, chorus of nobles, chorus of peasants, scene-painting and costume.

194. But how could this eminently respectable opera-school be made to result in historical music?

Here, there opened out before the musician an interminable prospect of grey cloud, in the necessity for pure and absolute invention; the call to produce something out of nothing. But behold!—how quickly he made up his mind. All he had to trouble about was to provide that the music should always sound a little different from what our habits would naturally lead us to expect it to do. That would already make it sound far-fetched; and then, all that would be required would be just

**The  
Operatic  
Style  
Resulting  
from the  
Historical  
Trait.**

the right cut to be given by the theatre tailor in order to convert it completely into historical music.

195. Upon music, as the richest means of expression, now devolved a totally new and uncommonly amusing task. This was: to take expression (out of which it had already made the object to be expressed) and to make it contradict itself. In striving to become its own object, expression (which, without being addressed to worthy purpose, is nothing in itself) had, in turn, to be denied; so that the opera-composer was now expected to attain the result of our peculiar theories of the world's creation; according to which a positive result was to be produced by two negations. We commend the opera style resulting to the attention of the German critic, as—emancipated metaphysics.

196. Let us examine this proceeding a little closer.

Assuming the composer's desire to be to give a perfectly plain and suitable expression, however he

**The** might apply himself to the task he could  
**Mixture of** only produce this by means of the kind  
**Styles.** of musical speech which now does duty as an intelligible musical idiom. Having, now, the further idea of imparting historical colouring to his music, and finding this fundamentally attainable only by making it generally strange and unusual, there was the mode of expression of a former musical period, in the first place in any case, standing ready to hand for the purpose of being imitated, or borrowed from, just as he might think fit.

197. In this way, the composer succeeded in



getting together a chequered jargon; which, in itself, corresponded fairly well to the desire for what was strange and uncommon, and which was made up of all the tasty mannerisms of various bygone periods.

198. As soon as musical speech gets free from any object to be expressed, and wishes to speak after the capricious manner of the operatic-aria, without contents; or, in other words, when it wishes merely to go on singing and whistling, it is, in its nature, so completely bound up with mere fashion that it has either to subject itself to this fashion, or, if lucky enough, to govern the fashion by itself introducing the latest mode. The jargon which the composer thus invented in support of his historical object, and for the purpose of speaking in a far-fetched manner, becomes, in the event of his being lucky, the fashion in its turn; but it has no sooner been adopted than it seems strange no longer, being now, as it were, the kind of coat which everybody is wearing, or the language which everybody speaks.

199. The composer must necessarily despair at finding himself continually, and by his own invention, hindered in his endeavour to appear uncommon; for which reason he is obliged, from the moment that he has quite made up his mind to fulfil the mission of supplying historical music, to fall upon some means of appearing uncommon; once for all.

200. Once for all, therefore, the most distorted

expression (since it is capable of becoming the fashion) must be again distorted; and, **The Musical** to look the matter straight in the face, **Penalty** he will have to say "no" where in **of Error.** reality he wants to say "yes" and will have to sob and whimper, just where all is pleasantly comfortable. This is the way, and there is no other way open to him to make sure of appearing always strange, peculiar and like coming from God-knows-where. There is nothing for it but to pose as being absolutely "cracked" in order to become historico-characteristic. By this means, however, we have actually acquired possession of what is entirely a new element. The necessity for being "historical" has made us hysterical instead; and this by causing a derangement which to our joy when closely examined proves to be nothing else than—

(What shall we call it?—Well! Suppose we say)—

NEO-ROMANTIC.



## CHAPTER V.

### EPITOME.

(201) The misconstruction of Beethoven as proceeding from the operatic course of events. (202) The new conditions of aria-melody arising from instrumental technique. (203) The necessities arising from allowing melody to become a factor in the drama. (204) The special language of instrumental melody. (205) The necessity even in instrumental melody for a purely human basis. (206) The discovery of this basis by Beethoven. (207) The error of instrumental music precisely the opposite of that of opera. (208) Beethoven's mistake similar to that of Columbus. (209) The inexhaustible power of music revealed by Beethoven. (210) The nature of his discovery rendered evident by the ineffectual efforts of his imitators. (211) The point of Beethoven's great departure described. (212) His transitional period. (213) His experiments in the formation of a new musical language. (214) The special utility to us of Beethoven's experiments. (215) The effect of the previous state of music in rendering it subject to fashion. (216) Misuse of the material provided by Beethoven's experimental style. (217) Different ways of regarding Beethoven's works by different classes of musicians. (218) Imitation in all cases confined to exteriors. (219) Opportunity for application of Beethoven traits supplied by programme music. (220) The abstract musical style resulting from the imitation of Beethoven by German composers. (221) The difference between the composer who has something to say which he cannot express and the one who gracefully expresses vacuity. (222) Berlioz as an imitator of Beethoven. (223) The mystification of Berlioz at aspect of Beethoven's greatest work. (224) The reflection of this mystification in Berlioz's work. (225) Its practical effect upon Berlioz's disposition

of means. (226) The result shown in Berlioz's great technical power. (227) Extraordinary effects produced by Berlioz in spite of deficiency of content. (228) The fanaticism of Berlioz and its curse. (229) His neo-romanticism finds an introduction to opera. (230) A dramatic attitude now given to the orchestra. (231) Mode of previous employment of the orchestra in opera described. (232-3) Orchestral conditions of dependence upon singer, dancer and pantomimist, who were in turn controlled by exigencies of form. (234) General subservience to formalism of the entire factors of opera. (235) Brilliancy of exterior colouring the only relief. (236) Freedom already attained in pure instrumental music. (237) The instrumental methods of Mozart, Beethoven and Berlioz compared. (238) The transference of these methods to operatic use. (239) The madness of trusting to absolute music for dramatic purposes. (240) Deference of both public and critic to the new "characteristic" style. (241) Characteristic effect made an excuse for other deficiencies. (242) Consequent mistrust of all operatic art by the genuine æsthete.

-

## CHAPTER V.

### INSTRUMENTAL MELODY.

201. TO the distortion of all truth and nature, such as we see exercised in the case of musical expression by the French so-called neo-**Absolute Music and the Opera.** romanticists there was added an apparent justification, and especially a nourishing material, which, issuing from a region of tonal art entirely removed from opera, we may conveniently brace together under the term of "the misconstruction of Beethoven."

It is very important to observe that everything which, up to the most recent time, exercised a practical and decisive influence upon the form of opera, came upon us exclusively from the region of absolute music, though by no means from that of poetry, or as the result of any healthy combination of both arts. We could not help seeing that from the time of Rossini the history of opera became simply the history of operatic melody. In the same way we saw also that influences due to the historico-dramatic phase of opera proceeded only from the composer, who, as the result of a compulsion to

assume the appearance of being historical, in mere course of the necessary efforts to vary his melody, was driven from one consequence to another; thereby having to notify the poet as to what must be supplied in order to meet the requirements of whatever project might be in hand.

202. This melody had been up to now, merely a song-melody artificially transplanted. This means **Application of Aria-material to Instrumental Use.** that it had been a melody which, separated from the text which forms its condition of existence, acquires nevertheless in the mouth or throat of the singer new conditions admitting of further culture development. Having gained these new conditions, more especially by means of a renewed listening to the primitive nature of melody as it exists in the mouth of the people, it was natural to turn an even more hungry attention to the conditions which arise when this melody, being separated from the singer's mouth, acquires a further lease of life from the technique of an instrument.

203. Instrumental melody, in the form of operatic vocal melody, thus became a factor of the pretended drama,\* so extremely ill as that was this unnatural kind of art reduced to fare.

204. Whilst the opera-melody, without posi-

---

\* The fact that vocal melody which does not receive its life-condition from the text but is merely attached to the latter is in itself already instrumental music is so necessary to be observed that, in the proper place, we shall return, not only to it, but to the question of the relation of this melody to the orchestra. (Original note.)

tively deriving its fruitfulness from poetic art, had been requiring effort upon effort in order to enable it to drag out a wearisome and profitless existence, instrumental music had been winning the power of treating the harmonic dance and song tune. It had done this by subdividing it into small and still smaller portions, and by joining, diminishing and augmenting these parts in various ways, so as ultimately to expand them into a special language.

205. This special language, however, remained in the high artistic sense capricious and incapable of expressing the purely human, so long as in it the necessity for clear and intelligible expression of fixed and individual manly sentiments was not accepted as the standard requirement for the melodic idiom.

---

#### BEETHOVEN.

206. This language could only rise to an emotion corresponding with the commonness of its origin.

**Artistic** Hence the fact that the expression in it  
**Error of In-** of thoroughly definite intelligible and  
**strumental** individual contents was impossible could  
**Melody's**  
**Develop-** only be discovered to us by that particu-  
**ment.** lar instrumental composer with whom  
 this longing to outpour such contents unreservedly  
 had become the glowing consuming impetus in all  
 artistic construction.

207. From the point represented by such longing



the history of instrumental music is the history of an artistic error. Not one however, like that of the opera-description, to end by exposing music's incapacities, but one, on the contrary, to terminate in the proclamation of its inherent and unlimited power.

208. Beethoven's mistake was the same as that of Columbus,\* who though only bent on discovering a **Beethoven's** new way to old India—a country already **Mistake.** known—thereby discovered a new world. Columbus also took his error with him to the grave. He made his companions confirm by an oath that the new world which they had seen was really India. Thus, though he himself remained in the toils of error, his deed had none the less effect in loosening the bandage from the world's eyes and in teaching it to recognise the true form of the earth and its unsuspected fullness of riches in the most unmistakable manner.

209. Now at this present time the inexhaustible power of music has been effectively unlocked for us by the primitive force of Beethoven's error. Through his bold and undismayed endeavour to reach what was artistically necessary in what was artistically impossible, the unlimited capability of music has been revealed to us—a capability extending to the accomplishment of every thinkable task, so long as

---

\* I have already in my "Art-Work of the Future" compared Beethoven with Columbus, but I am now obliged to resume the comparison on account of its containing another similarity worthy of note, which I have not yet had occasion to refer to. (Original note.)

music aspires to be simply what it really is—the art of expression.

210. The error of Beethoven, as well as the gain produced by his artistic exploit, could only become fully appreciable to us when we were able to review his work as a whole, when the composer and his production could be braced together in our minds as one complete manifestation and when the error itself could not fail to be brought home to us by the artistic efforts of his followers who had taken up the master's error which was not theirs, and which they could not associate with the giant force of his longing.

211. The contemporaries and immediate successors of Beethoven, however, recognised in his detached **Beethoven's** works, as far as the strength of their **Great** sensibility and receptive power rendered **Aspiration.** possible, just what was saliently recognisable, either in the emotional impression produced by the whole or in the formation of details. So long as Beethoven, in accordance with the musical surroundings then prevailing, merely gathered the blossom of this spirit into his works, the influence of his artistic activity upon those around could be but beneficial. But, from the point when, corresponding with sorrowful impressions of life, there grew within the artist the longing for a clear expression of specially characteristic and individual sentiments—a longing which seemed as if intended to bespeak the sympathy of his fellowmen, and which continued to grow to greater impetus of power—from this point, therefore, which was also one when it seemed continually of less moment to him to make

ordinary music, and in this music to express himself pleasingly, captivately or excitingly, than, on the contrary, to write as his inner being impelled him, with an increasing necessity to bring the realisation of his feelings and views to a sure and easily understood expression through the medium of his art—from this point begins the great painful life-period of the deeply-moved man and necessarily-straying artist, who, in the violent ecstasy and painfully-happy stammerings of a Pythian inspiration, must have made the impression of a genial lunatic upon the inquisitive listener who would be incapable of understanding him because of the inspired one's impossibility to descend to his level.

212. In the works of the second half of his artistic life Beethoven is mostly unintelligible, or rather liable to be misunderstood, where he intends to convey a peculiarly individual content with special clearness. He passes over the absolute-musical which is recognised as intelligible though but an involuntary convention including the song and dance-tune according to expression or form and in any recognisable approximation thereto in order to speak in a language which often seems like pure musical whimsical unbridledness; and which, not being attached to a purely musical context, is only bound together by a poetical idea which cannot, however, with poetical clearness, be expressed in the music.

213. It is as spontaneous experiments in the direction of forming for itself a language for its longing that the greater part of the works of this period must be regarded, so that they often appear

as sketches for a painting about the object of which the master was decided—but not about the intelligible disposition of details. He could not carry out the picture itself, however, until he had attuned the object of it to his means of expression; or, in other words, grasped its more general signification and set back the individual element in it into the peculiar tints of the tonal art, in order that, thereby, the subject itself might be in a certain way musicalised.

214. Had only these properly finished pictures in which Beethoven had spoken out with such charmingly beneficent plainness and intelligibility come before the world, the misunderstanding which the master himself caused to circulate would necessarily in any case have operated in a less confusing and bewildering manner.

215. Musical expression, in its separation from the general conditions of all expression, had however already fallen to the level of a mere fashionable whim, and was, accordingly, subject to all conditions of the fashionable mode itself. Certain melodic, harmonic or rhythmic traits at one time flattered the ear so seductively as to lead to their excessive employment; whereupon, after a short time, this abuse gave rise to such disgust that the same effects suddenly appeared taste as intolerable or even ridiculous.

216. Whoever was concerned to make music for the public pleasure was obliged to consider it of extreme importance to appear as strikingly new as possible, by means of the traits of absolute melodic expression which were just now described. Then as

the sustenance of such novelties could only be derived from the art-region of music itself and never from the changeful manifestations of life, that musician could not do otherwise than find a rich booty in those particular works of Beethoven which we pointed out as sketches for his great paintings, and in which the striving carried on in all directions for discovery of a new musical speech often results in convulsive movements which necessarily appear to the unintelligent, casual listener as original, odd, quaint and in any case, quite new.

217. The violent contrasts, the rapid and powerful crossing of parts, but more particularly the accents (either of joy and sorrow, or rapture and horror), often so thickly woven as to appear almost

**Imitation** simultaneous; the master's method, in the  
**of** course of his involuntary search, of mix-  
**Beethoven's** ing up the strangest harmonic melismen  
**Methods.** and rhythms for the production of new  
 tonal effects; in order, by their means, to succeed in  
 the expression of certain individual emotional  
 moments; all this, grasped in its purely formal ex-  
 terior, constituted so much technical education for  
 those composers who could recognise in the adoption  
 and application of such peculiarities of Beethoven  
 a luxuriously nourishing element for their universal  
 style of music. Whilst, in respect of Beethoven's  
 works, the *elder* musicians could only grasp or  
 approve of that which was most removed from the  
 composer's inner personality, and which appeared  
 only as the flower of a former and more careless  
 musical art-period, the *younger* aspirants in composi-

tion imitated principally the exterior traits and peculiarities of Beethoven's later manner.

218. As there was here, however, only an exterior to imitate (on account of the real meaning of these peculiar traits having remained an unspoken secret of the master) a stern necessity arose for seeking out some object or other which, in spite of the very nature of things compelling it to be of general application, might offer opportunity for the use of traits specially relating to what was peculiar and individual.

219. Such an object as this was, naturally, only to be found in some region outside that of music; and this, as far as purely instrumental **Transition to Programme Music.** music was concerned, could only prove to be that of fantasy. A pretence of representing musically some subject relating to nature or phrases of human life took the form of a programme which was placed in the listener's hands with the view of entrusting it to his power of imagination, when the indication had once been given, to extract therefrom the meaning of all musical peculiarities indulged in, and which might now extend to the most variegated and noisiest of confused uproars.

220. German musicians stood near enough to Beethoven in spirit to avoid engaging in the adventurous movement which had only resulted from the master not having been understood. **The German Abstract Musical Style.** They tried to escape the results of these mannerisms of expression by clipping off their extreme points; besides which, in combining them with a revival of older expres-

sive means, they evolved an artificial mixture, which may be called an abstract musical style—a style in which it was easy to go on for a long time, spinning music quite respectably and honourably, without having to fear any great intrusions of drastic individualities.

221. As against the fact that Beethoven principally impresses us as a man who has really something to say which he cannot clearly express, his modern imitators appear as men who tell us, in a frequently charming and punctilious manner, that—they have nothing whatever to impart.

---

BERLIOZ.

222. For Paris, as the great consumer of all art-tendencies, it was reserved however that a French-  
**The Basis of Berlioz's Inspiration** man, endowed with unusual musical intelligence, should also follow up the tendency here indicated to its furthest possibility. Hector Berlioz is the immediate and most energetic offshoot of Beethoven, taking his style as it was when—as I have already indicated—he abandoned the sketch, in order to proceed to the actual picture. The bold and glaring pen-strokes, which were often thrown off quite fugitively, and in which Beethoven formulated his experiments for the discovery of a new means of expression too quickly to admit of critical examination, fell from the great master into the greedy scholar's hands as almost his only heritage.

223. Was it a foreboding that Beethoven's last symphony and most finished picture would also remain the last work of this kind which caused Berlioz, who also aspired to the production of great works, to refrain, for selfish reasons, from demanding of this picture the meaning of the master's peculiar impetus—an impetus which was certainly otherwise directed than to the satiation of fantastic spontaneity and humour? The one thing certain is that Berlioz's artistic inspiration was nourished by the fond contemplation of those peculiarly crisp traits. He was both horrified and charmed at the aspect of the magical and enigmatical combination of those feelings in which the master had endeavoured to communicate his secret; which, however, he never could express in music, though fondly imagining that in music it could alone be spoken.

224. At this aspect, Berlioz, as the result of his fixedness of gaze, was seized with giddiness. A witch-like chaos danced in wild confusion before his eyes, the ordinary visual power of which had yielded to a "many-sightedness"; and, in his dazzled condition, he thought he perceived tintedly fleshy forms where there were only phantoms toying with his fancy.

225. This hobgoblin kind of illusion was, however, no other than Berlioz's inspiration; awakening from which he could only find (with the enfeeblement of one who had been stupefied with opium) a frosty emptiness round about him. He tried to enliven this by artificially restoring the fervour of which he had been dreaming; but this could only



be done by painful and troublesome new dispositions and application of his entire musical household stock.

226. In attempting to depict the strange pictures of his fiercely-heated imagination, and in order to communicate them to the incredibly thick-skinned world of his Paris surroundings with certainty and extra clearness, Berlioz carried his enormous musical intelligence to a pitch of technical power previously unconceived. That which he had to say to the people was so wonderful, so unusual, and so utterly unnatural, that he could not say it straight out by the aid of plain and simple words; he wanted an enormous array of complicated machines for the purpose, in order, by the help of these endlessly graduated and varied mechanical resources, to utter that which a simple human organ could not possibly speak—by reason of its thoroughly anti-human character.

227. We are now familiar with the kind of supernatural wonder with which, in former times, the priesthood used to impose upon childish men in such a way as to make them believe that some god or other was appearing to them: nothing but mechanics ever worked these wonders. So, nowadays, the *supernatural*, just because it is *unnatural*, also requires the aid of mechanics in order to be paraded before an unenlightened public; and the Berlioz orchestra is, in fact, a wonder of this kind. Every height and depth of the capability of mechanics has been probed by him to an extent resulting in an acquaintance worthy of astonish-

ment, so that, should we be willing to recognise the inventors who serve industrial mechanics at the present day as benefactors of humanity in the modern state, we must assuredly pay homage to Berlioz as the Messiah of absolute music in that he has enabled musicians to realise a marvellous effectiveness out of the most abject crudeness and nothingness of content in music-making by means of previously unheard-of and manifold applications of mechanical means.

228. Berlioz himself was certainly not fascinated at the commencement of his artistic career by the **General** reputation for mechanical inventions, for **Estimate of** in him there lived a real artistic impetus, **Berlioz.** and this impetus was of burning and consuming character. That, in the endeavour to pacify this impetus by means of the unhealthy and inhuman, he was driven in the direction already more closely described until, as an artist, he had to descend to mechanics, and, as a wonder-working, imaginative fanatic, he became obliterated by all-devouring materialism, converts him (besides his being a warning example) so much the more into an object of deep sympathy, that he is, even now, consumed by artistic longing; though already lying buried under the waste created by his own machines.

229. He is the tragic victim of a tendency, the consequences of which have been traded upon in another direction with the most unscrupulous shamelessness and the most indifferent self-satisfaction in the world.

The opera (to which we now return) has also swal-

lowed, like a fat, well-tasting oyster, the neo-romanticism of Berlioz, and the refreshment derived therefrom has imparted to it a renewed appearance of being lively and comfortable.

---

#### THE APPEARANCE OF INSTRUMENTAL AS OPERATIC VOCAL MELODY.

230. A huge addition to the means of a most manifold expression—an addition hailing from the **Previous Subordination of the Orchestra in Opera.** region of absolute music—now came to the modern orchestra, which, in the opera composer's sense of the term, was now itself to be trained to behave "dramatically." Previously to this, the orchestra had never been anything else than the harmonic and rhythmic supporter of the melody. No matter how richly or luxuriantly it might have acted in that capacity it had always remained subordinated to the melody, and even in the event of an immediate participation in the latter's delivery it had still invariably served only the purpose of elevating it as the undisputed sovereign, so that by, as it were, a magnificent display of its courtly state it might be made to appear so much the more brilliant and dignified.

231. Everything which belonged to necessary accompaniment of the dramatic action was, as far as the orchestra was concerned, taken from the region of ballet and pantomime, where melodic expression had developed from the folk-dance by precisely the

same law as the opera-aria had developed from the folk-song. Just as the one kind of tune had in the first place the passing whim of the singer and the invention-thirst of the composer to thank for its ornamentation and style of delivery, so had the other, and in like sense, been dependent upon the dancer and pantomimist; and in both it had been impossible to interfere with the roots of their being, since, by remaining outside the domain of operatic art, they were beyond either recognition or reach of the factors of the opera.

232. The original nature of the folk-song and dance thus continued to speak out in the sharply **The Forms of Song and Dance still Dominant in Opera.** delineated melismatic and rhythmic form, the exterior of which composers might vary, but the lines of which they dared not obliterate, at the risk of entirely losing hold and drifting hopelessly away into the most indefinite and chaotic expression. In the same way pantomime itself was controlled by the melody of the dance, for the pantomimist could admit nothing as capable of expression by gesture, except what the dance melody, already chained to strict rhythmic and melismatic conventions, was in some way prepared to accompany suitably.

233. The pantomimist was thus strictly obliged to regulate his movements and gestures—and, of course, whatever was intended to be expressed by them—by the power of the music alone, and to mould and cast his own power according to this standard, just as in the opera the actor-singer has to temper his dramatic action according to the power

of the aria's fixed expression, so that his very own power (which in the nature of things would be justified in giving the law to all else) was obliged to remain undeveloped.

234. The situation of the artistic factors to one another, in opera, as in pantomime, being one in opposition to nature, musical expression had remained bound by a stiff formalism. **Degradation of the Orchestra in Opera.** The orchestra, in particular, as the accompanist of dance and pantomime, had not

been able to gain the capability of expression which it could not have failed to reach if the dramatic pantomime itself, as the object of the orchestral accompaniment, had been in a position to develop according to its own illimitable inner power, and thus in itself suggest to the orchestra the material for actual invention.

235. Nothing beyond this slavish vulgar rhythmic melodic accompaniment had been possible to the orchestra even in opera; so that luxury and brilliancy of exterior colouring had been the only bases of any attempt to vary it.

236. In independent instrumental music this stiff expression had been already destroyed by the **Greater Freedom of Pure Instrumental Music.** simple means of breaking up its melody and rhythm into fragmentary portions; which now became transformed into new, and endlessly manifold forms according to a purely musical standard.

237. Mozart had still begun his symphonies with a complete melody, which, as if in play, he divided into contrapuntal phrases of continually decreasing

length. Beethoven's most characteristic work began with these fragmentary phrases, out of which he erected structures growing continually more rich and stately before our very eyes. Berlioz, on the other hand, delighted in the variegated confusion to which he subjected his pieces; and the enormously complicated machine, the kaleidoscope, in which he shook the gaily-coloured stones up together at his will was the orchestra, which he then handed to the modern opera composer.

238. The melody, cut and hacked as it was, besides being reduced to fragments which at pleasure might be formed into successions—the more contradictory and unmetrical, the more striking and uncommon—the opera composer now appropriated by transferring it from the orchestra to the voice. Although this kind of melodic proceeding might appear fantastic and capricious when applied to orchestral pieces, everything was to be excused; for the difficulty and even impossibility of expressing one's ideas with full certainty in music alone had already lured the most earnest masters into adopting these capricious whims.

239. In the opera, however, where definite poetical expression afforded the musician an entirely natural hold upon a sure and unfailing expression, this impudent confusion of every kind of expression—this intentionally refined mutilation of every expressive organ which was still healthy—(as we perceive in the grotesque order of the most foreign and diverse melodic elements in the newest opera style)

is only to be attributed to the intervention of an utter madness on the part of the composer, who, in the lordly project of creating the drama solely from the resources of absolute music, and with nothing more than mere service from the poet, necessarily arrived, at last, at the ridiculous position in which we see him to-day, and in which he is exposed to the laughter of every sensible man.

240. The composer who since the time of Rosini had, by means of the vast accumulation of musical apparatus, developed only from the frivolous side and had lived only by absolute opera melody believed himself now called upon to step boldly and daringly forward from the standpoint of melodic frivolity to that of dramatic characteristic. The most celebrated opera composer is now paid homage to as a master in this "characteristicism," not only by the public who were long ago deeply compromised as his fellow criminals against the truth of music, but also by the art critic.

241. Looking back upon the greater purity of the melody of former times, and comparing it with that of Meyerbeer, it may be true that the critic has rejected the latter as empty and frivolous. In consideration, however, of all the wondrous novelties in the way of "characteristic" which have blossomed from the music of this composer, he has received full absolution for all his sins.

242. Thus, the admission must follow—that the musically and dramatically characteristic is after all only possible in combination with the frivolously

and unsubstantially melodic, and this, in the end, causes the æsthete a critical mistrust of operatic art altogether.

Let us now briefly describe this modern "characteristic" quality in opera.





## CHAPTER VI.

### EPITOME.

(243) Operatic "characteristique" old and new. (244) Gluck's treatment of conventional operatic forms. (245) Mozart's treatment of the same. (246) Mozart's characteristic effects dependent upon the poet. (247) The varying manner in which both Rossini and Weber reduced the poet to subservience. (248) The poet's fate in the hands of his composer. (249) The subservience of Frau v. Chezy in writing the libretto of "Euryanthe." (250) The attitude of Weber explained. (251) His exaggeration of the power of melody. (252) Weber's ready-formed musical conception imposed upon the librettist. (253) Impossibility of carrying out such conditions. (254) The composer's duties and difficulties increased by false conditions. (255) How lack of musical suggestion in a libretto leads to adoption of a frivolous style by the composer. (256) The middle-course offered by the mosaic style. (257) The public disinclination to accept this as melody. (258) The general indifference to signification of text. (259) The composer's moments of forgetfulness those of his greatest success. (260) The failure of criticism to fix the lessons presented by Weber's "Euryanthe." (261) The exposition offered by "Euryanthe" of the impossibility of reconciling absolute self-sufficing melody with true dramatic expression. (262) Weber unprepared to make a sacrifice of drama, thus concluding his career. (263) Meyerbeer now undertakes to effect the Weber object from the standpoint of Rossini. (264) Meyerbeer's Judaism gives him a comprehensive outlook. (265) Gluck's musical inspiration as starting with musical expression and reflecting back upon speech. (266)

By Gluck each language was indifferently to be considered as speech. (267) Subject to this indifference Gluck required speech to justify his melody instead of allowing melody to absorb speech as in the case of Rossini. (268) Meyerbeer specially fitted for absolute music as a consequence of his indifference to any one language as mother-tongue. (269) Meyerbeer a follower, not a leader. (270) Meyerbeer's alacrity in appropriating ideas. (271) His demonstrative manner in such appropriations. (272) Meyerbeer the European operatic weathercock. (273) Meyerbeer faces "Masaniello" and "William Tell" with "Robert the Devil." (274) Painfulness of the duty of criticism of some modern works. (275) Illusion not to be pleaded on behalf of the modern composer. (276) Criticism of modern works as such not to be combined with that of the exploitation of operatic affairs. (277) The means to be adopted for courageously attacking this subject in the interests of art. (278) Retrospect of the course of opera previous to Meyerbeer. (279) The new departure in favour of "characteristic" effect. (280) Renewed interest in the poet. (281) His position changed by migration of the Rossini tendency to Paris. (282) The certain field allotted to the poet in French opera. (283) Increase of the musical domain without affecting the poet's right. (284) The slight musical requirements of the average French opera poem. (285) The frequent occurrence of this type of work at the Opéra Comique. (286) Transcription of the conventional French opera into "grand opera" by Auber and Scribe. (287) Leading features of the Scribe opera poem. (288) The poet left to his own resources in "Masaniello" and "William Tell." (289) Meyerbeer's insistence upon taking everything into his own hand. (290) The onerous compulsion put upon Scribe in respect of libretti for Meyerbeer. (291) The contrast between Scribe's writings for Meyerbeer and for other composers. (292) Scribe's demoralisation necessary for the production of such libretti as those of "Huguenots" and "Prophète." (293) Difference between this form of coercion of the poet and that exercised by Weber in the case of "Euryanthe." (294) Meyerbeer's application of the Berlioz orchestra to "dramatic" opera. (295) Meyerbeer's indifference to dramatic unity. (296) Meyerbeer's mode of procedure with his libretto. (297) Meyerbeer's triumph in the "historico-characteristic" groove. (298) Reasons why Germans avoid the term "Wirkung" in speaking of Meyer-

beer's "effects." (299) Effect without cause. (300) Operatic effects not relying upon the imagination as in programme music, but simply fantastic. (301) The dependence upon mechanical resources of materialistic interpretation. (302) Outline of a situation in explanation of the foregoing. (303) The effects incidental to the situation desired by the composer, without their cause. (304) Illustration from Meyerbeer's "Prophète." (305) The hero in this scene. (306) Utter degradation of the poet. (307) Misapplication of mechanical effects as unassociated with poetical intention. (308) "Effect" defined. (309) Criticism not specially directed to Meyerbeer, but generally to the newest form of opera. (310) Meyerbeer's musical deficiencies a matter of surprise in view of his public success. (311) The effect produced upon him by a really poetic situation. (312) The poet's inspiring influence. (313) Illustration from the "Huguenots." (314) Limitations of Meyerbeer's musical inspiration in consequence of his pretention to the dramatic ascendancy. (315) The musician's power impoverished by aspiring to what is beyond his means. (316) Music thus reduced to the level of borrowing from mechanics. (317) Basis of the great error underlying the whole course of opera.

-

## CHAPTER VI.

### MODERN HISTORICAL CHARACTERISTIC OPERA.

243. MODERN "characteristique" in the opera is sharply to be distinguished from that which previous to Rossini must count as such, in the tendency of Gluck or of Mozart.

244. Gluck laid intentional stress both upon the recitative which was declaimed, and upon the aria which was sung. This was done simultaneously with complete preservation of these forms and with an instinctive solicitude to comply with the usual demands upon their purely musical contents. These consisted of reproducing the feeling of the text as truly as possible through the medium of musical expression, but more especially of never dislocating the purely declamatory accent of the verse in favour of this expression. His object was to speak in music both correctly and intelligibly.

245. It was impossible to Mozart with his radically healthy nature to speak in music otherwise than correctly. He expressed with equal clearness both

"rhetorical pigtail" and genuine dramatic rhythms. In his view, grey was grey, and red red; only that the grey, like the red, when freshened with the dew of his music, presented all shades of the original colour and thus became as a manifold grey and red respectively. Spontaneously his music ennobled all the theatrically, commonplace characters with which he had to deal, by, as it were, taking the raw stone and turning it out in polished condition by means of presenting its every side to the light and, finally, holding fast to that angle in which it was capable of giving out the most brilliantly-tinted rays.

246. In this way Mozart was enabled to elevate, for example, the characters of "Don Juan" to such a fullness of expression as to suggest to a Hoffmann such extremely deep and secret relations between them as had never occurred to either poet or composer. What is certain, however, is that Mozart would have found it impossible to be thus characteristic through his music alone, and that he depended upon the characters being already in evidence in the work of the poet. The more we are enabled to penetrate the warm colouring of Mozart's music so as to perceive its real foundation, the more unmistakably we recognise the poet's sharp and definite pen-and-ink drawing, the lines and strokes of which so dictate the requisite musical tints that, otherwise, such wonderful music would have been frankly impossible.

247. But in further course of the development of the opera we see this marvellously happy relation

**Eclipse of the Poet effected by Rossini.** between poet and composer, as exhibited in Mozart's masterpiece, entirely disappeared; until, as we have seen, a Rossini entirely dispensed with it, constituting absolute melody as the only legitimate factor of the opera, to which every other interest, but especially that represented by the poet's collaboration, must entirely give way. We may also perceive that the protest of Weber against Rossini applied only to the shallowness and lack of character presented by this melody and not in the least to the unnatural position towards the drama which the musician had assumed. On the contrary, Weber contributed still further to strengthen the unnatural element of this relation; for, through the characteristic ennoblement of his melody, he raised himself to a position in comparison with that of the poet which was, in fact, superior; and this to a degree corresponding exactly with the superiority of his melody over that of Rossini in point of characteristic nobleness of expression.

248. With Rossini the association of the poet was that of a genial dependent—of an estimable and amiable gentleman who was to be treated by the composer to oysters and champagne *ad libitum*, so that the obsequious poet could not fare better in any service than in that of his famous "maestro." Weber, on the contrary, with a rigid belief in the characteristic purity of his one and indivisible melody, enslaved the poet with a dogmatic severity; compelling the poor wretch to erect his own funeral pyre and to immolate himself as food for the fire of the Weber

**Rossini's relation to the Librettist.**

melody. Unconsciously the poet of "Der Freischütz" had been brought to this act of suicide. Out of his own ashes he protested, as the warmth of the Weber fire filled the air, that this warmth really came from him. But he was profoundly in error, for his wooden logs gave warmth only by being demolished and consumed; and, after the conflagration, the ashes of the prosaic dialogue alone remained for him to claim as his own property.

249. After "Der Freischütz" Weber tried a still more pliable poetic slave, and for his new opera, "Euryanthe," took a lady into his pay, from whose more unconditional submission he even required that she should allow herself to be consumed out and out in the glow of his melody; and, after the burning of the pile, not leave so much as even the ashes of the prose behind. Weber's correspondence with Frau v. Chezy informs us with what painful care during the preparation of the text of "Euryanthe" he felt himself obliged again and again to worry his unfortunate poetic helper; how he rejects and dictates, and then dictates and rejects, how in this place he strikes something out, and in that he wants something added, how here the text must be longer, and there it must be shorter; indeed his orders extend even to the characters themselves—to their motives and to their actions.

250. In all this—was Weber really morbidly obstinate? Was he acting like some overbearing parvenu, full of vanity at the success of his "Freischütz," and thus trying to play the despot in the



very place where, in the nature of things, he should have tendered obedience?

Oh, no! His words of passionate excitement were only the expression of that honourable artistic care incumbent upon the musician who had been deceived by force of circumstances into undertaking to construct the drama itself from absolute melody.

251. The mistake here made by Weber was considerable, but it was one of which the commission **Weber's Mistaken Aspiration.** was a necessity on his part. He had raised melody to its most beautiful and most feeling nobleness; and, now, he wanted to crown it as the Muse of the Drama; and to use its strength to drive before it the whole dissolute set which profaned the stage. If in "Der Freischütz" he had disposed all lyric traits of opera poetry for expression in this melody, he now wished to outpour the very drama itself from the rays of light of his melodic star.

252. Of Weber's melody to "Euryanthe" it might even be said that it had been written before the poem; so that in order to supply the latter he required someone who, having his melody in both ear and heart, would merely write to it adaptable poetry. This being in practice impossible, he and his poetess fell into a habit of wrangling about various theoretical questions, with regard to which neither one party nor the other could arrive at any clear understanding. In this case, when quietly examined, we see, therefore, to what painful uncertainty even men of Weber's spirit and artistic love of truth can be led through adhering to an artistic fundamentally erroneous view.

253. The impossible was obliged, however, even in Weber's case, to remain impossible. With all his indications and directions to the poetess he could get no dramatic basis susceptible of being completely dissolved in his melody, and this precisely for the reason that he wanted to originate an actual drama—not one which should be merely a play provided with lyrical moments in which, as in "Der Freischütz," he would have had for its music nothing to consider except those particular moments. In the text of "Eury-anthe" there still remained, in addition to the dramatic lyric element, for which, as I said, the melody was written beforehand, so much that was entirely foreign to absolute music that Weber, with all his precise melody, was unable to control it.

254. Had the text of "Euryanthe" been the work of a real poet—one, that is, invoking the musician's help in the same way as the musician was now invoking that of the poet—the musician in his attraction to the poem before him would not for a moment have been in any doubt as to how to proceed. In places where, for his broader musical expression, no nourishing or justifying material might be forthcoming, he would have participated by providing, according to his lesser power, an accompaniment which though subordinated to one element would have been no less serviceable to the whole work. Only in places where the requirements of the dramatic material created the necessity would he have employed his greatest demonstration of musical expression.

255. This text of "Euryanthe" had resulted

from an inversion of the proper relations between poet and musician, and the latter (who was really playing the part of poet) was, in those places where a natural condition of things would have induced him either to withdraw or to efface himself, faced by the two-fold task of giving an entirely musical impress to material which was absolutely devoid of all musical suggestion. Weber would only have been able to bring this to success by striking out in the frivolous direction of music; and, with total disregard of truth, giving rein to the epicurean element—employing, *à la* Rossini, an amusing kind of melody, for the description, alike, of death and devil. It was precisely against this, however, that Weber had raised his most energetic protest; declaring that, with him, melody was to be everywhere full of character—meaning thereby truthful, and in correspondence with all phases of sentiment. He was accordingly compelled to adopt a different procedure.

256. Wherever his melody, consisting of long phrases for the most part, previously written and placed upon the text like a brilliant wide-spreading garment, would have inflicted too great a strain upon the text, he separated it into fragments; subsequently joining these into an artificial mosaic in order to provide the declamation required by the sense. This he then covered up by a thin melodic varnish so as to keep up an outward appearance of absolute melody capable, as far as possible, of being separated from the text. But he was unable to realise the deception thus intended.

257. Not Rossini alone, but also Weber himself, had so emphatically raised absolute melody to the level of forming the prime operatic material that the opera itself, now forcibly separated from all dramatic coherence and deprived of its very text, had in its most naked form, become public property. A melody which was really to become popular had to be suitable for being scraped, or blown; or else hammered out upon the piano without losing anything essentially. The public went to Weber's operas, also, only for the purpose of hearing as many such melodies as possible; and great was the master's error in flattering himself that his polished-up mosaic of declamation was going to be accepted by the public as melody—for that was what he had really had in view.

258. In Weber's own estimation the music was justified by the words; but, on the one hand, the public were thoroughly—and, indeed, rightly—indifferent to the words; besides which, it was unmistakable that the text had not been, even appropriately, reproduced musically. This half-fledged kind of melody was precisely what most diverted the listener's attention from the text and caused it to concentrate upon the formation of an entire melody which never made any substantial appearance. Thus, the longing for representation of a musical thought was stifled beforehand; the enjoyment of melody being, however, so much the more sensibly reduced, that the longing for it was awakened without being fulfilled.

259. With the exception of places in "Eury-

anthe" where the composer might fairly consider  
 his full natural melody justified by his  
 artistic judgment, this work only pre-  
 sents instances of his artistic strivings  
 having been crowned with actual and  
 beautiful success where, from a love of  
 truth, he entirely foregoes the use of  
 absolute melody; and where (as in the opening scene  
 of the first act) he reproduces the highly-dramatic  
 speech as such, and by the most noble and true  
 musical expression. There, he no longer allows the  
 intention of his artistic creation to centre in the  
 music, but in the poem; the music being applied  
 only in furtherance of its realisation—a realisation  
 which, by its aid alone, could not possibly be  
 effected with such fullness and convincing truth.

260. "Euryanthe" does not receive from the  
 critic the degree of respect merited by its exception-  
 ally instructive contents. Public opinion showed  
 itself somewhat undecided—being half excited to  
 interest and half inclined to ill-humour. Criticism,  
 which in reality always goes by public opinion, in  
 order (just as it may happen to take into its head)  
 either totally to regulate itself by the general view  
 and by the exterior success of the work, or, it may  
 be, to contest these through thick and thin, has never  
 been able clearly to sift the fundamentally different  
 elements which crowd together in this work in the  
 most contradictory manner and to justify the want  
 of success which attended the work by referring to  
 the composer's struggle to unite these contradictory  
 elements into one harmonic whole.

261. Never, however, so long as opera has ex-

isted, has a work been composed by such a gifted, Nobleness profoundly emotional and truth-loving and Sad composer, in which, notwithstanding his Conclusion noble ambition to attain to what was of Weber's Endeavour. best, the inner contradictions of this entire department of art have been more logically carried out or openly presented. These contradictions in terms are: absolute self-sufficing melody and thoroughly true dramatic expression.

262. In this case one or other of these had necessarily to be sacrificed—either Melody or Drama. Rossini made a sacrifice of Drama; and this Weber nobly desired to restore, through sheer power of his more sensible melody. He had to experience the impossibility of this. Weary and exhausted by the painful labour of his “Euryanthe,” he fell back upon the luxury of an Oriental fairy-dream; and it was through the wonder-horn of Oberon that he breathed his last.

---

#### MEYERBEER.

263. What the noble and lovable Weber, warmly imbued by a holy belief in the supreme power of Cosmopoli- pure melody as the loveliest emanation tanism of the folk-spirit had unsuccessfully Gluck and striven for, was now, from the stand- Meyerbeer Compared. point of the Rossini melody, undertaken to be effected by the friend of his youth—Jacob Meyerbeer.

264. Meyerbeer had experienced all phases of

the development of this melody, not merely from an abstract distance, but always in real proximity as to point and station. Being a Jew, he possessed no language having a growth inseparable from that of his inner being. He spoke, with equal interest, in any desired modern language; and, thus, could set any of them to music, with no further regard for their qualities than that of scrutinising their capability of being rendered, at his pleasure, subordinate to absolute music. This feature in Meyerbeer has sometimes caused him to be compared to Gluck; who, though German, composed to French and Italian opera-texts.

265. In point of fact, Gluck's creations did not proceed from the instinct of speech (which such case invariably requires to be the mother-tongue); for the question, with him, as a musician, and as far as language was concerned, was simply the eloquence of speech; as, in the form of utterance by the speech organism, it waves upon the surface of these thousands of organs. His creative power was not the result of the producing force of those organs, working through speech up to the level of musical expression; but, starting from detached musical expression, it first went back to speech for the purpose of justifying, in some way, the lack of foundation which musical expression exhibited.

266. Thus it was that each language was equally indifferent to Gluck, because, for him, it amounted merely to speech; and, had music been really able, in this transcendental direction, to penetrate through speech into the very organism of language, it would, in any case, have required to be completely transformed.

267. In order not to interrupt the course of my present reasoning I must refer this extremely important subject and its fundamental exposition to a more fitting place in my writings. For the moment, let it suffice to recommend the circumstance to special notice that, to Gluck, it was simply a question of living speech, no matter in what language; and that, in that speech alone, he found justification for his melody. Since Rossini, however, this speech has been completely devoured by absolute melody; leaving only its material skeleton, consisting of vowels and consonants, as so many pegs from which to suspend the musical tone.

268. In consequence of Meyerbeer's indifference to the real spirit of every language, and the faculty, proceeding therefrom, which he possessed, of making any one of them exteriorly his own by a slight output of exertion (which is one which modern education has rendered accessible to the rich) he was just the man to have only to do with absolute music; as detached from all connection with speech. Besides that, he was, by the same means, rendered capable of surveying all manifestations in the course of opera-music's development on the very spot; and he invariably thus followed—never failing to direct his steps to any such point.

269. It is specially to be observed that, in the course alluded to, Meyerbeer only followed; never by any chance coming up with it, much less going before it; in which respect he resembled the starling, who follows the plough-share in the field, and who



picks up the earthworm as it lies exposed in the furrow.

270. Not one single tendency is proper to Meyerbeer; each having been merely listened to, and caught from, his predecessors, though with a huge ostentation afterwards exploited; and with such astounding rapidity, in fact, that the man ahead, to whom he had listened, was scarcely ever allowed to get a word out, before Meyerbeer shouted out the entire phrase; not troubling himself about either whether he had rightly understood the sense of it, where it had come from, generally speaking, or whether he had not persisted in shouting something different from what the man ahead wanted to say.

271. However, the noise of the Meyerbeer phrase was too deafening for the man ahead to proceed with the proper sense of his intention; so, whether he liked it or not, he was obliged, if he wished to have anything to say at all, to chime in with it.

272. In Germany, where Meyerbeer endeavoured to find a phrase in sufficiently youthful bloom to fit

**The** the discourse of Weber, he was altogether unsuccessful; for what Weber **Tactique.** had explained in fullness of melodic life, did not admit of being reproduced in Meyerbeer's dry schoolboy formalism. Disgusted with the unfruitfulness of his pains, and, as if in betrayal of his friend, he listened at last to the siren-like strains of Rossini; betaking himself to the land whence these had proceeded.\* In relation to European opera, Meyerbeer thus became the vane of the musi-

---

\* Und zog in das Land wo diese Rosinen gewachsen waren.

cal weather; which, with every change of wind, is always at the first a little undecided; turning round and round until the wind is fixed, when it also comes to a standstill. In this way he, in Italy, composed operas *à la* Rossini; but he did this only until the greater wind of Paris began to change and to be blown in the new direction by Auber and Rossini with their "Masaniello" and "William Tell" right up to storm point!

273. Then, how quickly was Meyerbeer to be found in Paris! But there he found in Weber, as "Frenchified" (only think of "Robin des Bois") and in Beethoven, as "Berliozed," moments which, though too far outlying to admit of having been ever thought of by either Auber or Rossini, were nevertheless correctly assessed by the cosmopolitan talent of this Meyerbeer. He bunched up everything which presented itself to him into a kind of huge phrase, comprising all colours and sorts, and being of such glaring outcry that Auber and Rossini were completely silenced; for "Robert" the grim "Devil" had set upon them all.

274. It is deeply painful, in surveying the history of modern opera, to be able only to speak well of the dead; but to be compelled to follow up the living with merciless bitterness. Still, in yielding to this compulsion to be frank, we can but recognise that only such masters as are dead and gone have really deserved the glory of martyrdom; because the illusions which affected them were so noble and beautifully illustrated, and their faith in the truth of what they took to heart was so earnest and sacred,

**Degrada-  
tion of  
Modern  
Opera.**

that the sacrifice to it of their artistic life was joyful notwithstanding its painfulness.

275. No living and active composer allows an inner impulse now to cause him to wrestle for any such crown of martyrdom. Illusion is, at present, too widely recognised for strong belief in it to be any longer possible. But, without this belief, this joyous belief, operatic art has been degraded by its modern masters to the level of a mere article of speculation. Even the Rossini smile of luxury has disappeared; and, everywhere, only the yawn of the wearied, or the grin of the demented remains in evidence. The aspect of madness may almost be said to be the most attractive; for it appeals to us as the lingering presence of that illusion, from which there formerly sprang such noble sacrifice.

276. We will not here entertain the juggling aspect of the disgusting exploitation of the affairs **Deplorable Outcome of Mistaken Operatic Views.** of our opera-theatre; as we have to picture before ourselves the effect produced by the last living and still active hero of opera-composition. The spectacle could only fill us with an anger in which we should be liable to proceed to inhuman harshness against one personage, should we lay alone to his account the burden of corrupt affairs, which hold him all the more certainly a prisoner through his appearing to us as placed at their giddy summit, and invested with crown and sceptre. Do we not know that kings and princes are now, precisely in their most arbitrary actions, the least to be called free? No! Let us rather regard, in this king of opera-music, only those features of madness which reveal him to us as

deserving of pity, and as offering a warning; but not as being worthy of contempt.

277. For the sake of eternal art we are obliged, however, to acquire express knowledge of the nature of the madness in question; because its contortions enable us in the clearest way to probe the illusion which gave existence to a kind of art, with regard to which the desire of applying a healthy and youthful courage to the rejuvenation of art generally compels us to become clear.

We can now proceed to this fuller inquiry by short and rapid strokes, having already described the nature of this madness; of which only a few familiar features remain to be mentioned in order to render our ideas with regard to it quite secure.

---

#### THE CHARACTERISTICALLY HISTORICAL QUALITY IN OPERA.

278. We have witnessed opera-melody, through frivolity caused by its becoming detached from all

**Survey of** real connection with the poetical text,  
**the Opera's** next becoming, as a consequence of its  
**continually** absorption of the national song tune, so  
**increasing** far inflated as to claim to be historico-  
**Independ.** characteristic. We have also observed  
**ence of the** how, by continually decreasing individu-  
**Poet.** ality of the principal characters in the musical

drama, leading features of the actor were allotted to the attendant "emancipated" masses; from whom these traits were then obliged to be reflected back

upon the main personages. We have further remarked upon the impossibility of impressing upon the surrounding mass a distinctive, or in any way recognisable character, except by means of historical costume; besides seeing the composer compelled to resort to a most unusual employment of his strictly musical means, in assertion of his supremacy, and by way of eclipsing the scene-painter and stage-tailor, to whom the real credit of installing the historico-characteristic more properly fell.

And, finally, we have seen how the composer, as a result of the desperate tendency of instrumental music, had brought a peculiar kind of mosaic melody within reach.

279. By arbitrary combinations of this mosaic the composer was then enabled, at any time—that is whenever he so desired—to appear strange and peculiar; and this he did with the aid of the orchestra; used not merely wonderfully but purposely made strange by material means, in the belief that, thereby, he could produce the most highly characteristic effects.

280. We must not at this stage leave out of sight that all this was finally impossible without the co-operation of the poet, for which reason we now turn for a moment to examine the newest relationship existing between poet and musician.

281. The new opera tendency undoubtedly proceeded, through Rossini, from Italy, where the poet had sunk to a position of complete nullity. The migration of the Rossini tendency to Paris caused the position of the poet also to change.

**Further increase of the Musician's domination.**

282. We have already alluded to the peculiarity of the French opera; recognising as its nucleus the diverting ideas expressed by the "couplet." In French opera the poet had previously only allotted a certain field to the composer, which the latter was free to cultivate for himself; formal possession of the site, however, continuing to remain with the poet.

283. If, in course of time, the musical domain had so increased, in accordance with the nature of things, as now to cover the entire ground, that did not prevent the title from continuing a possession of the poet, so that the musician could not in strictness be considered more than a mere holder; and though he might regard his holding as hereditary property, he nevertheless—as in the Roman-Germanic empire of yore—paid homage to the emperor as lord of the land he held. The poet granted the holding to the musician, who enjoyed it.

284. This is the situation which has always favoured the production of what is best in opera as a department of dramatic art. The poet  
 "Grand  
 Opera" and really did exert himself to provide situa-  
 its tions and characters, as well as to invent  
 Librettists. an entertaining and exciting piece which  
 he did not trouble to prepare for the musician and his forms until the whole was carried out; so that the special weakness of French opera poems lay rather in their contents not appearing to require any music at all, than in their appearing to have been originally overburdened with it.

285. At the Opéra-Comique this entertaining, and often charmingly witty, kind of opera was at

home; and always at its best when the music naturally, and with an absence of all restraint, was allowed to enter into the poem.

286. Scribe and Auber now translated this description of opera work into the more pompous language of "grand opera," and in "Masaniello" we are still clearly able to recognise a well laid out play, in which there is no positively premeditated intention of sacrificing the dramatic to the purely musical interest.

287. In the poem of Scribe, however, the dramatic action is already allowed very materially to depend upon the participation of the surrounding masses, so that the principal characters set out rather as speaking representatives of these masses than as real characters acting from individual necessity. The poet already held the reins of the horses attached to the opera-coach so loosely before arriving at the imposing chaos of grand opera that they were shortly to leave his hand for good!

288. In "Masaniello" and "William Tell" the poet continued to keep the reins in hand, only because neither Auber nor Rossini cared for anything else than to make it thoroughly comfortable and melodiously agreeable for themselves in the luxurious opera-coach, and without a thought as to where or how the well-practised coachman might happen to drive.

289. In the case of Meyerbeer, on the other hand, the composer, not finding this melodic ease very

suitable, felt inclined to take the reins from the hands of the coachman, in order, through the zig-zag of the course, to create the wonderment necessary for attracting notice personally, which was impossible all the while he sat alone in the coach, with nothing else than his own personality.

290. Information as to the painful torture inflicted by Meyerbeer upon his poet Scribe in the **Meyerbeer** drawing up of his opera-subjects has **and Scribe**. only reached us in the form of stray anecdotes. Were we, however, to take no notice of these anecdotes or to know absolutely nothing of the secrets which have leaked out about opera-consultations between Scribe and Meyerbeer, we should still not be able to avoid seeing, by the finished poems themselves, what an onerous and confusing compulsion must have been placed upon the otherwise so smart, fluent, clever and intelligent worker—Scribe, in putting together these bombastic and extravagantly odd libretti for Meyerbeer.

291. Whilst Scribe went on writing fluent, entertaining and, anyhow, cleverly-executed dramatic poems for other opera composers—pieces which never failed to present a fundamental ground of action, together with situations both suited to it and easily intelligible—the very same expert poet could only prepare for Meyerbeer the most incoherent nonsense, comprising motion without motive, situations which were a jumble of stupidity and characters too crazy to excite anything but laughter.

292. This could never have happened naturally; for a sober understanding like that of Scribe is not



**Meyerbeer and Weber with their Librettists.** very apt to take up with experiments in mental derangement. Scribe was, to begin with, evidently worried into the condition of being beside himself, or he could never have brought forth such a piece as "Robert the Devil." All healthy sense of dramatic action must have departed before he could have evolved the "Huguenots," in which he shows himself a mere compiler of scenic changes and contrasts. And a forcible initiation into the mysteries of historical roguery must have been indispensable to his consenting to turn out a "Prophet" of swindlers.

293. An influence of composer upon poet is here to be recognised of similar character to that exercised by Weber upon his poetess in **Meyerbeer's Ideal Libretto.** the case of "Euryanthe," but with what fundamentally different motives! Weber wanted a libretto of such character as to enable it, at all times and with every scenic shade of colouring, to rise up into his noble soulful melody. Meyerbeer, on the other hand, wanted a huge, parti-coloured, historico-romantic, satanico-pious, dogmatico-lewd, sancto-nonsensical, mystico-daring, sentimentally roguish, stagy conglomeration of all sorts, in order to provide him with the occasion for inventing fearfully curious music which, however, could never prove successful in application, in consequence of the natural thickness of his musical skin. He felt that, with all his prepared array of means for musical effect, something still remained necessary which was totally absent, and that this was the case even after he had

scraped up his effects from all directions into one confused heap, supplemented them with theatrical gunpowder, and capped the whole by an awful explosion.

294. What Meyerbeer wanted from his poet was, therefore, in a sense, the stage application of the Berlioz orchestra, but (bear it well in mind) only as abjectly self effaced, to the degree of forming a mawkish groundwork for vocal trills and pauses in the Rossini style, so that the whole might come under the heading of "dramatic" opera.

295. The task of bringing all these elements of musical effect into anything like dramatic unity would have necessarily appeared to Meyerbeer as unsuited to his intention; for he was no idealistic enthusiast, and he saw that whilst, on the one hand, he would have made no converts by such unity, on the other, and by a jumbling of all sorts, everybody would be, in some way, satisfied; in the sense that each person would surely get something or other to suit him. Nothing was more important to Meyerbeer, therefore, than to secure a confusion of colour and variegated hotch-potch; and thus the genial Scribe had to sweat blood in order to get together for him the dramatic pack of rubbish upon which he had set his heart.

296. Then, in face of it, the musician stood quietly debating on which particular limb of this monster some rag or other of his musical stock might be applied, and this, in a manner not only as striking and noisy as possible, but so as also to present an uncommon degree of singularity; and,

therefore, to exhibit the desired "characteristic" quality.

297. In this way, and before the very gaze of our art critics, he developed the power of music in Meyerbeer's the "historico characteristic" groove; **Triumph.** and he brought it to such a pitch as to be treated to the refined flattery of being told that, though the text of his operas was pitifully bad yet it was wonderful what he could make of such miserable stuff.

Thus the fullest triumph of music was reached, for the composer had ruined the poet beyond hope of his redemption, and on the ruins of his art, the musician, as the only real poet, was definitively crowned.

---

#### OF "EFFECT": OR, RESULTS WITHOUT CAUSE.

298. The secret of the Meyerbeer music is—"effect"; and, in the desire to explain to ourselves what this means, it is essential to note **Real Force** of the term our instinctive avoidance of the term "**Effect.**" "**Wirkung**"\* which is more familiar to us. Our natural feeling only accepts "**Wirkung**" as happening in connection with a foregoing cause, so that where, as in the present case, we may happen to be instinctively doubtful about the existence of any such cause, or where we may be even fairly

---

\* The comparison is about equivalent to that between "effect" for the mere sake of effect, and the effect which exists only for the realisation of an artistic object. (Translator.)

assured that no such connection exists at all, our hesitation causes us to look about for a term somehow descriptive of the impression which we have received, say, from these Meyerbeer pieces, and we are thus led to the employment of a foreign word, such as "effect," precisely on account of its remoteness from our natural feeling. If we would, therefore, clearly indicate what we intend to imply by this particular kind of "effect," it becomes desirable to translate it as :

An effect which is without cause.

299. In point of fact, this "effect without cause" is what is produced by the Meyerbeer music upon those who are able to find entertainment in it. This marvel was only possible in music of the most extreme description, or **Attempts at a substitute for real poetic basis.** in other words, to a special kind of expression—a power which, in the opera, had hitherto sought to make itself independent of any worthy object. This complete independence was shown by the real object for expression (and which was necessary in order to afford it existence, measure and justification) being reduced to moral and artistic nullity, and this to so great a degree that such existence, measure and justification could now only be reached by an act of musical free-will from which all positive expression was necessarily absent. This very free-will, however, could in its turn only operate in conjunction with other forces for the production of absolute effect.

300. In instrumental music of an extreme description, appeal was made to the justification afforded

by the listener's power of imagination, at one time through the adoption of a programme, or at another, by that of a mere title—a means of interpretation outside the region of music being thus provided. In the opera, however, the means of interpretation had to be materialised, and the imagination thus relieved of all such painful trouble. What had, in the former case, resulted from the force of manifestations taken from natural or human existence and indicated by programme was destined, in the present, to be brought forward in a state of natural reality; so as to produce a fantastic effect without any attendant effort of the imaginative faculty.

301. This materialistic means of interpretation the composer now derived from scenic mechanical resources; accepting such effects as fell within that range in the sense of being also independent or in other words of being detached from their objects, which, through lying outside the region of mechanics and belonging rather to that of life-representing poetry, might have been able to afford them some sense and justification.

302. Let us make ourselves entirely clear upon this subject by appeal to an example, characterising the art of Meyerbeer generally, and in the most exhaustive manner.

(a) Let us assume the poet inspired by some hero who, as a champion for light and freedom, has  
**Case for** burning within his breast a mighty love  
**Illustration** for his down-trodden brethren, injured  
**of the New** in their most sacred rights. The desire  
**Operatic** is to portray this hero at the climax of  
**Methods**

his career, and as irradiate with his glorious exploits, for which purpose the following decisive moment is chosen.

(*b*) Together with the crowds of people who have followed his inspired call, forsaking house and home and wife and child, in order, in their struggle against mighty oppressors, either to conquer or to die—

(*c*) The hero has arrived before a citadel which must, at any cost of blood, be conquered by his host, all inexperienced as they are in the art of war; that is, if any victorious progress is to be secured for the work of freedom.

(*d*) Trials already endured have caused demoralisation to appear; and bad passion, disagreement and confusion are already raging in his army; but the only means to prevent all being lost is to secure that all shall be won this very day.

(*e*) That is the situation in which heroes rise to their highest pinnacle of greatness.

(*f*) The poet depicts this hero (who, in nightly solitude, has just sought counsel from that god within him—the spirit of purest human love—by inspiration from which he has become consecrated to his task) at the first streak of morning's dawn, as stepping out among his hosts, who have already become undecided whether to act as craven cattle or rise to the level of god-like heroes.

(*g*) At the hero's mighty voice the people now assemble. His eloquence goes right home to their inmost marrow: and they, also, become aware of the living spirit within them. Their elevation, ennoblement and inspiration now raise the hero himself to

greater heights, and he presses forward towards realisation of his inspiration by the actual deed. He grasps the standard and swings it high in the direction of the forbidding ramparts of the citadel—the fast stronghold of those foes of humanity, who, as long as they remain secure behind those walls, render all better future for men impossible.

Up then! Now to conquer, or to die! This city must, and shall, be ours!

(*h*) At this point the poet has exhausted his resource, and he now requires the stage to present the supreme moment in which this mood of extreme excitement appears suddenly before us in convincing reality. The stage-scene must become to us a world, nature must declare itself as participating in our emotion, no longer affecting us as a merely cold and accidental surrounding.

(*i*) Behold now! this holy need impels the poet to cleave the morning cloud asunder, so that at his bidding the beams of the rising sun illumine that citadel, thus consecrated to the victory of the advancing and inspired host.

(*k*) In this situation we have presented to us the florescence of all-powerful art, its marvel being only capable of realisation by that of the drama.

303. But wonders of this kind which spring from the inspiration of the dramatic poet, and by him can only be produced with the aid of manifestations lovingly culled from experiences of life itself, are not desired by the opera-composer; who is ready enough to accept the effect, but prefers to

**Insincerity  
and want  
of Purpose  
in the New  
Operatic  
Methods.**

dispense with the cause, as not happening to depend upon his individual power.

304. In that principal scene of Meyerbeer's "Prophète" which, exteriorly, resembles that just now described, we experience, as far as the ear is concerned, the purely physical effect of a hymn-like melody, borrowed from folk-song, expanding into an imposing degree of fullness; whilst for the eye there is absolutely nothing open to our perception but a masterpiece of mechanism. The sole object which ought to be warmed by that melody, and upon whom alone the illumining beams of that sun have any reason to fall—in other words, the inspired hero—who ought, surely, by force of inward emotion, to outpour himself in those melodic strains: the very one at the behest of whose pressing necessity the sun first appeared; the germ, in fact, which formed the sole justifying condition of all this luxurious dramatic fruit—*is simply not there!*\*

Instead of that, the action is taken up by a characteristically dressed-up tenor singer; whom Meyerbeer, with the aid of his dramatic private secretary, Scribe, causes to sing as finely as possible; to say

---

\* I might be answered:

"We did not want your glorious popular hero, who is rather a superfluous emanation of your own revolutionary imagination. On the other hand, we desired to represent an unhappy young man, who, embittered by sad experiences and misled by seditious pretensions allows himself to be inveigled into crime; which, however, he subsequently atones for by a sincere repentance."

So, I then inquire about the sun-effect; and here I might also be answered:



nothing of making him also indulge in some rather communistic behaviour at the same time; by way of throwing in something piquant for people to think about.

305. The hero alluded to is a poor devil who undertook the part of a deceiver only through weakness; and, in the most abject manner, deplores—not the error due to his fanatical illusion (which might conceivably have justified a sun in shining on it) but his weakness and mendacious habits.

306. What may have been the considerations which combined in order to enable such an unworthy

**Further Exposition of the Incongruities of Modern Opera.** object to be placed before the world under the title of a "Prophète" we shall not trouble to inquire; and it must, therefore, suffice for us to consider the result;

which is, at all events, amply instructive. In this example we perceive, in the first place, the complete degradation of the poet, both moral and artistic; a condition in which not even the best good-will towards the composer will enable us to perceive a single redeeming feature. It follows, therefore, that, in future, the poetical object can no

"This representation is perfectly in accord with nature; for, why should not the sun rise early in the morning?"

This, I must admit is a very practical excuse for an arbitrary sun-rise. But for all that, however, I am obliged to insist that, but for a situation similar to that which I have indicated swimming before your mind's eye, this sun would never have occurred to you. And, after all, it was not the situation itself which really possessed any attraction for you, but only its "effect" which you had any desire to make use of. (Original note.)

longer attract; but is far more likely to repel us. The active agent can now interest us only as a costumed singer; and, in the scene just mentioned, the interest can only apply to the melody in question; and to the effect which, considered as melody alone, it is capable to produce.

307. The sun, also, can only work an individual effect; in the sense of being a theatrical imitation of the actual sun. The ground of its working does not therefore lie within the province of drama at all, but in that of pure mechanics, which is all we have to think of on the occasion of its appearance; for, in the event of anyone imagining this appearance to represent an intentional transfiguration of the hero as the champion of mankind, the composer himself would be considerably startled. Quite contrary to that, both in his own estimation and in that of his public, everything depends upon keeping the mind free of such ideas; and in concentrating attention upon the mechanical feat.

308. In this very scene, therefore, so applauded by the public, all art is absorbed by its mechanical constituents; accessories are treated as essential; and the only essential to be recognised is "effect." Effect, that is to say, of the absolute order; and which consists of the enticement of artificially affectionate advances without the moving power presented by enjoyment of a true love.

-

THE FUNDAMENTAL ERROR IN THE OPERA'S  
CONSTITUTION.

309. I have not undertaken to give a criticism of the Meyerbeer operas; but only through them to **Meyerbeer** represent generally the nature of our **and His** newest form of opera, in its connection **Public.** with this entire department of art. Though frequently obliged by the nature of the subject to allow my representation to bear some historical feature, I have not been willing to yield to the temptation of embarking upon historical detail. The fact of having, in an especial manner, to characterise the capability and vocation of Meyerbeer for dramatic composition, causes me, for love of the truth, which I have here busied myself completely to expound, to refer in the strongest way to one remarkable manifestation in his works.

310. In the Meyerbeer music there appears such a frightful lack of substance, depth and artistic value, that we are tempted to estimate his capacity at nothing; and especially when we compare it with that of the great majority of contemporary composers. The fact of his nevertheless attaining to such success with the whole European opera-public need not excite our wonder, seeing that the marvel is so easily explained by a reference to the kind of public in question; but there is a purely artistic reflection to be made upon the subject, which for us is equally engaging and instructive.

311. We note, in this connection, for instance, that, side by side with proofs of the incapacity of

**Meyerbeer's** this far-famed composer to present even  
**Occasional** the faintest sign of real artistic life from  
**Inspiration.** his own musical resources, passages occur in his operas in which he raises himself to the height of the most incontestably great artistic power. These passages result from a pure inspiration; and, if we examine the matter more closely, we shall also be able to trace the source from which the incitement to this inspiration came—that being none other than the really poetic situation.

312. Thus, in those places where the poet had happened to forget his usually slavish deference to the musician, and had unpremeditatedly come across a moment in which the free refreshing air of human life might be deeply breathed and breathed again, he causes the musician to fall under its effect as an inspiring influence; and the same composer who could not, even by exerting the utmost power of his musical predecessors, evolve the slightest trace of any actual invention, was now enabled, all at once, to alight upon instances of the richest and most nobly emotional musical expression.

313. I am reminded here, particularly, of certain detached traits in the well-known sad love-scene of the **Special In-** fourth act of the "Huguenots"; and, speci-  
**spiration of** ally, of the invention of that wonderfully  
**Meyerbeer** emotional melody in G flat major, which  
**and its** can only be described as being like the  
**Cause.** fragrant bloom of a situation, the expression of which extends to all phases of joy and pain of which the human heart is capable, and with which there is very little, and certainly only the most finished of musical works, which can possibly be

compared. I mention this with sincere pleasure, and with a true enthusiasm; because manifestation of the real nature of art in such a clear and incontestable manner enables us with delight to observe how the capability for real art-creation must come, even to the most degenerate music-maker, from the moment that he treads the path of a necessity which is superior to his own selfish choice, and his perverted endeavours suddenly betake themselves to the road which leads alike to all genuine art and to his own salvation.

314. But the fact of mentioning here only a single trait and not a more comprehensive section —not, for example, the entire love-scene **Cause of the Musician's undeveloped Power.** to which I was referring, but only isolated features of the same, compels us to meditate with special earnestness upon the frightful nature of that madness which stifles development of the musician's most noble capabilities; imparting to his muse the expression of a sickly smile which is intended for everybody, or, it may be, that of the convulsive grinning of a crazy tyranny. This madness consists of the musician's passion to contest for what, by himself, and in virtue of his own powers, he can never possess; and in the general construction of which he can only participate after the occasion to do so has been provided for him by the power proper to another.

315. By the unnatural zeal with which the musician endeavours to satisfy his vanity—that is, by representing his power in the brilliant light of being endowed with unlimited range he has brought that power (which in point of fact is one altogether

rich) down to the level of that beggarly poverty in which the Meyerbeer opera now appears.

316. In the selfish attempt to secure the drama's acceptance of its narrow forms as those alone available this opera-music has brought to light the wretched and burdensome stiffness and want of pliability of these forms, up to the point of their having become insufferable. In the craze for appearing rich and manifold this music, considered as a branch of art, has sunk into a condition of the completest barrenness; finally becoming reduced to the straits of even borrowing from material mechanics. With the egotistical pretence of providing exhaustive dramatic characteristic simply by musical means, it has, moreover, at last entirely lost all power of natural expression and degraded itself to the level of an acrobatic contortionist.

317. In the beginning I affirmed the error in opera as an art-department to consist in the fact that :

A means of expression (music) had been converted into the object; and that the real object of expression (drama) had been converted into a means.

We must, therefore, now point out the basis of this illusion, and finally of the madness which has degraded opera as an art-department, in its total sacrifice of natural qualities, to the level of becoming ridiculous; and we do so in these terms :

**That this means of expression aimed at dictating by itself the object of the drama.**



## CHAPTER VII.

### EPITOME.

(318) The musician's conviction of the necessity for change. (319) Totally new ideas requisite as to the future position of the poet. (320) Harmony and rhythm the interior, melody the exterior, of music. (321) Harmony and rhythm the flesh and blood. (322) Melody the man himself, arresting attention finally by the eye. (323) Melody as the equivalent of the eye of man the fullest expression of music's inner being. (324) The people's production of melody analogous to that of the species. (325) Respective ideas of man by Greek art and Christianity. (326) Investigation of the interior organism fatal to the exercise of life functions. (327) Analogy to this effect presented by Christianity. (328) Social intercourse necessary to the people's artistic life. (329) The new life of music arising from the re-union of its separated components. (330) The first stages of this artificial union. (331) The necessity for rules analogous to those of poetry. (332) The result as shown in scientific music tending gradually to natural expression. (333) The longing for this natural expression exhibited by Beethoven. (334) His employment of all means in the striving to give effect to this longing. (335) Different conception of melody on the part of operatic composers. (336) The contrast presented by their treatment of folk melody. (337) Beethoven's evolution of melody from the inner organism of music. (338) Compliance with natural conditions leads Beethoven to seek association with the poet. (339) The natural and undisfigured beauty of the melody thus produced. (340) The opposed description of art. (341) Recur-



ring attention to folk melody in the history of operatic music. (342) The opera composer's incapacity for its treatment in consequence of his irregular relation to the poet. (343-4) His retention of the aria as sole melodic form. (345) Mechanical character of melodies written to a set form. (346) The aria only an art-form in the case of its happening to be the perfect utterance of a special musical organism. (347) Beethoven's mode of procedure with the aria form. (348) Beethoven's power of exhibiting this description of melody in its most vivid aspect, that of the very act of production. (349) Beethoven's, a speculative course of action. (350) Dramatic directness of expression causes him to evolve his melody directly from the text. (351) Living melody evolved from the poet's thought. (352) The womanly character of music. (353) Its leading impulses in accordance with that character. (354) The love of woman. (355) The meretriciousness of Italian opera. (356) The coquetry of French opera. (357) The coquette's attitude towards love. (358) The coquette and courtesan compared. (359) The prudishness of German opera. (360) The complacency of the prude. (361) The dangers of prudishness. (362) The perfect womanhood of true opera music. (363) The beautiful instinctiveness characteristic of both. (364) The foregoing illustrated by Mozart. (365) The man to associate with the perfect womanhood of true opera music is the poet.

-

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE RELATION BETWEEN MUSICIAN AND POET.

318. WE are now at the end; having followed the question of the power of music in the opera, up to the point of demonstrating its entire incapacity.

When we speak of opera music, at the present time and in the stricter sense, we speak no longer of **The True** an art but of a fashion. Only the critic, **Positions of** who is not inwardly impelled by any **Composer** pressing artistic necessity, can still have **and** **Librettist.** any hopes or doubts to express about the future of opera; for the artist himself (assuming that he has not degraded himself to become a speculator on the public) proves that he regards the opera as already dead by the fact of seeking for expedients in connection with it; and, particularly, by falling back upon the desirable energetic participation of the poet.

319. But, here, in this desirable participation of the poet, we arrive at the very point with regard to which we must secure a clearness, both conscious and as bright as day, if we desire to seize and retain

the relation between musician and poet in its really healthy and natural bearing. This relation must be one completely opposed to what has hitherto prevailed; and the difference is so complete that the musician will now be unable to make himself at home until he has given up all remembrance of the old unnatural condition. This should be done in his own interest, as a last link with the latter is always capable of drawing him back into the old madness.

In order to become perfectly clear with regard to the relation of which we have now to treat, and which is the only one to be regarded as thoroughly healthy and profitable, we must once more, and in the very first place, concisely, but with precision, state the nature of our present-day music.

---

#### THE NEW OFFSPRING OF MELODY, BEETHOVEN.

320. We shall most quickly succeed in making a clear survey of the nature of music by stating it, shortly and convincingly, as condensed into the one idea of melody.

All interiors are the foundation of, and give conditions for the existence of, exteriors; although exteriors present the first manifestation by **Survey of the Nature of Music.** which the existence of the whole is revealed. Thus, harmony and rhythm may well be admitted as formative organs; though

melody is the first manifestation by which the form is revealed.

321. Harmony and rhythm are the blood, the flesh, the nerves and the bones—together with the intestines; and they therefore remain similarly hidden from the eye, as the latter glances at the man, erect and full of life.

322. Melody, on the other hand, is this man himself; complete, and as he stands before us. At the aspect of this man we confine our attention to the slender form, as it manifests itself to us by the shaping outline of its encasement; we are absorbed at aspect of the face, as the most expressive part of this formal exterior; and our attention is, at last, arrested by the eye, as that manifestation of the entire man which is the fullest of life and the most capable of exterior communication.

323. This organ, in its turn, acquires its power of communication by an unlimited capacity for taking up the utterances of the surrounding world; and it is, therefore, by its means that the man simultaneously reveals his innermost being in the most convincing way. Thus is melody the fullest expression of music's inner being; and every melody which is true, and therefore dependent upon the conditions of this inner being, speaks also to us through the eye, as the organ revealing that interior to us in the most expressive manner; though it does so always in such a way that we catch no glimpse of the naked inner organism (which, in itself, is still without form) but see only the flash of the pupil:

324. When the people invented melodies they

went about it in a manner comparable to that of the spontaneous exercise of genitive power in the reproduction of species by which man is again produced and brought forth. This man, who is truly complete at the moment of coming to the light of day, manifests himself at once by his exterior form; but not by his concealed interior organism.

325. Greek art based its idea of this man completely upon his exterior form; which it strove to reproduce in stone and bronze, in the truest and most life-like manner. Christianity, on the other hand, proceeded anatomically. It wanted to discover the soul of man; opening and dissecting the body for that purpose, to the exposure of that formless interior organism which repulses our glance, precisely because it is neither designed nor fit for the eye to see.

326. This search for the soul involved killing the body; and this desire to attain to the fountain of life led to the cancellation of that life's utterance, as well as to our succeeding only to lifeless interior organs; which can never form conditions of existence, except by uninterrupted exercise of their functions. In fact, however, the soul thus sought for is nothing else than life; so what remained to Christian anatomy was, therefore, only—death.

327. Christianity had stifled the organic impulse of the people's artistic life, together with its natural

**Catholicism** power of production. With its dualistic  
 and scissors it had cut into the flesh, to the  
 • **Folk-Song.** destruction of the artistic life-organism.

328. Social intercourse, in which alone the artistic production-power of the people can be raised to the capacity of perfect artistic creation, belonged to Catholicism; and, only in that solitude where fractions of the people—away from the great main-road of social life—were by themselves, and alone with Nature, did the folk-song, through having grown up inseparably from poetic art, survive; though there, only in a condition of childlike simplicity and parched contraction.

329. If we now divert our observation from this point, we perceive, on the other hand, and in the **Music's** region of art culture, music taking an **Exceptional Course of Development.** exceptionally novel course of development; namely, that of a new life, springing from the anatomically dissected, and therefore killed, inner organism; by means of a setting-together of the separated organs, and their abandonment to new growths.

330. In Christian church song, harmony had, independently, taken form. Its natural necessity for existence had impelled it to seek utterance as melody; yet, for this utterance, a support from rhythm, as the element from which both form and movement were derived, was indispensable; and this it took from the dance, though, as a spontaneous measure, existing rather in imagination than in reality. The new union could be but artificial.

331. In the same way as poetry had been constructed according to rules which Aristotle had

taken from the tragic poets, music, now, had to be drawn up according to scientific rules and admissions. This relates to a period when even men had to be made up according to learned prescriptions and chemical decoctions.

332. Naturally, a man of this kind sought also to construct learned music. Mechanics had to set up organism, or even to replace it. The restless impulse of all this mechanical invention tended, however, always in the direction of the real man: the man who was to be set up from the conception of a man: and who, necessarily, only in this way could at last attain to an organic existence.

We find ourselves here, however, encroaching upon the entire subject of the marvellous development of modern humanity.

333. The man whom music thus wanted to set up was no other than melody; as the momentum **Beethoven's** representing the surest and most convincing utterance of her actual living inner **Ideal of Melody.** organism. The further music travels in fulfilment of this longing to become a man, the more clearly do we perceive a striving—extending even to a plaintive degree—in favour of clearer melodic manifestation; and in the works of no musician is this longing observable with such weight and force as in the great instrumental works of Beethoven.

334. In these works we admire the colossal endeavour of mechanics, as participating in the longing to set up a man, and as tending to resolve its own component parts into the blood and nerves of a real living organism; in order, thereby, to attain to an infallible utterance as melody.

335. This peculiarly distinctive course of our entire art-development is exhibited by Beethoven in a far more truthful manner than by our **Folk melody in the hands of Opera-Composers.** operatic composers. The latter conceived melody to be something lying ready-made beyond the region of their art-work; so they detached melody, in the organic production of which they had taken no part, from the mouth of the people; they tore it away from its organism; applying it, afterwards, merely to serve their arbitrary whims; without any form of justification but that of making it contribute to their luxurious enjoyment.

336. If we compare that folk-melody to a man, we must then consider that that man was flayed alive by these opera-composers; who afterwards, so to speak, used his skin, in order to bedeck a puppet, for the purpose of giving it a human appearance; but, in this, they could get no farther than to deceive our half-blind opera-public.

337. In Beethoven, on the other hand, we recognise that impetus, which is natural to the life of **Beethoven's** music, of bringing forth melody from **Aspiration** its inner organism. Moreover, he leaves **as leading to seek the Poet's Aid.** it, in a certain way, to be brought forth from the very organs of music, and before our eyes; thus initiating us, by leading up to this act of delivery, as a result of music's organic necessity. The most decisive statement which the master delivered to us, however, was in his grandest work; where, at last, he felt the necessity, as a musician, of throwing himself into the arms of the poet



in order to perfect the art of production of this true, infallible, real and redeeming melody.

338. In order to become man, Beethoven was thus obliged to do so completely; in the sense of becoming a man dependent upon ordinary masculine and feminine conditions. How earnestly deep and longing must have been the meditation which, at last, revealed to the inexhaustibly rich musician the homely melody with which he breaks forth into the words of the poet:

Hail! O joy! thou god-like sparkle.

This melody, moreover, reveals to us the entire secret of music. We know now, and have acquired the capability of becoming artists, working organically, and with full consciousness.

339. Let us now pause at this most important feature of our inquiry; allowing ourselves to be guided by this "Joy" melody of Beethoven.

The re-discovery of folk-melody, on the part of the cultured musician, offered us a two-fold interest: that of joy at meeting it in the folk, and therefore in its natural beauty and undisfigured; and that of investigation of its inner organism. The joy which it caused was, strictly speaking, obliged to remain unfruitful, as far as our art-creation was concerned; because we should have had rigidly to confine ourselves, as to form and contents, to a kind of art similar to that of the folk-song itself in order to succeed in imitating it with any degree of success. Indeed, we should have been scarcely able to acquire the capability without becoming, in the closest sense,

folk-artists ourselves; so that, in point of fact, we should by no means have had simply to imitate this melody; but, as folk ourselves, again to invent it.

340. We should have been able, on the other hand, in that totally opposed description of art (which, compared with that of the folk, is as remote as the planets) to take this melody, though only in its roughest sense, and apply it with surroundings and under conditions not capable of doing otherwise than disfigure it.

341. The history of operatic music has a natural tendency to lead always back to the history of this melody; for, according to certain laws similar to those of ebb and flow, the periods of the use and renewed use of folk-melody occur in turn with those of its incipient and gradually more dominant disfigurement and corruption. Those musicians who were most painfully conscious of this evil quality of the folk-tune, when transformed into opera-melody, saw themselves compelled, therefore, by a more or less clearly-felt necessity, to be mindful of the organic production of this melody itself.

342. The opera-composer was most favourably situated for discovery of the necessary mode of action; and he was also precisely the one who could never succeed, on account of standing in a fundamentally wrong relation to that element of poetry which was alone capable of bearing fruit; having, in his unnatural and usurping situation, robbed it, in a certain sense, of its productive organs. In his irregular position towards the poet, the composer might set about his work as seemed to him best; but, wherever the feeling rose to a

climax of melodic outpour, he had to bring his ready-made melody with him; seeing that the poet must needs have begun by accommodating himself to the form in which the melody had to be made manifest; this form, however, being of such despotic influence upon the disposition of the opera-melody that it may truly be said to have dictated its essential contents.

343. This form was taken from the folk-song tune; its outward disposition, the alternation and return of motion according to rhythmical time measurement, being even borrowed from the dance-tune; which, however, with the song-tune, was originally one and the same thing. The form was used only for varied setting; itself remaining, down to the most recent time, the inviolable outline for the opera-aria. In it, alone, a melodic construction continued to remain even conceivable; and of course this, moreover, could only remain a mere construction; pre-regulated by the skeleton outline for which it was destined.

344. The musician, as soon as he had once embarked upon this outline, could no longer invent, but merely vary; and he was thus bereft, beforehand, of all power for the organic production of melody; true melody being, as we have seen, itself the utterance of an inner organism, and requiring therefore, if it has been organically produced, to regulate its own form; which must be one to correspond with its inner nature, in the most definite manner possible.

345. A melody, however, which was built upon any certain form, could never be anything else than

an imitation of the melody of which that outline corresponded to the original utterance. The striving to break this form is evident, therefore, in the case of many opera-composers; but the artistic success necessary for its subjugation could only accrue in the event of new and suitable forms being secured.

346. The new form, however, would have been an actual art-form only in the case of its being manifestly the most certain utterance of a special musical organism. But all musical organism is by nature feminine. It bears, only; and does not produce. Production-power lies beyond it; and, without impregnation by this power, it cannot bear. Here lies the entire secret of the unfruitfulness of modern music.

347. We described Beethoven's artistic proceeding, in his most important instrumental movements, as a "leading on to the parturition of melody." Let us here observe the characteristic truth that, although it is only in the course of the tone-piece that the master allows his full melody to transpire, yet he must be presumed to have had it ready from the beginning. He merely took the narrow form—precisely the form against which the opera-composer had fought in vain—and broke it up, beforehand, by springing it asunder into its component parts; in order to re-write them by the power of organic creation into a new whole. The means he adopted was to place the component parts of several melodies in various positions of contact, as if to exemplify the organic relationship of these component parts, notwithstanding their apparent difference;

**Beethoven's  
Methods  
of Melodic  
Treatment.**

and therefore, at the same time, to show the common origin of the different melodies themselves.

348. Beethoven herewith reveals to us only the inner organism of absolute music. He must have

**The Inner Organism of Absolute Music** felt himself, in a certain way, constrained to raise this organism from its mechanical conditions; to vindicate its inner life and to show it to us in its

most vivid aspect—that of the very act of production. His only means of impregnating this organism continued, however, to be always absolute melody; with which he gave it life, by the one process of—so to speak—exercising it in bearing; thus, truly causing the pre-existent melody to be born again. But, precisely on account of thus proceeding, he found himself impelled to take the power of music's organism (which he had now gifted with such life as to raise it to the production stage) and bring to it the fructifying-seed, which he had found in the poet's power of impregnation.

349. Far from all æsthetic experiment, Beethoven, who in this had unconsciously taken into **Beethoven's Melody an Evolution from the Text.** himself the spirit of our entire course of artistic development, could, nevertheless, not go to work otherwise than, as it were, speculatively. He, himself, had in no

way been moved to spontaneous creation by any poet's producing thought; yet the ardent wish to bring forth music caused him to turn his gaze in all directions in search of the poet. Even his "Joy" melody, accordingly, does not appear to have been either invented upon, or in consequence of, the poet's lines; but composed only through the emotion

caused by retaining the general contents of Schiller's poem in mind.

350. Only where Beethoven desires to correspond to the contents of the poem in its course, by rising up to a dramatic directness of expression,\* do we see his melodic combinations continually show evidence of their evolution from the text; when the manifold variety of expression, previously unheard of, to which his music attains, becomes immediately allied with the poem in its incontestibly highest sense, and to its diction; and this to such a degree that, henceforth, the music, as separated from the poem, appears to us suddenly as both unthinkable and inconceivable.

351. We have thus arrived at the point at which we find the result of æsthetic inquiry into the organism of the folk-song proved by an artistic act, and with the most enlightening clearness. In the same way that living folk-melody is inseparable from living folk-poetry, and, when torn away from it, is organically killed, so, the organism of music is only capable of bearing living melody, when fructified by the poet's thought. Music is the female—destined to bring forth—the poet being the real generator; and music had, therefore, reached the very summit of madness when it aspired, not only to bear—but also to produce.

---

\* I refer particularly to the "Seid umschlungen Millionen" and to the combination of this theme with "Freude, schöner Götterfunken" in order to make myself quite clearly understood. (Original note.)

## THE FEMININE ORGANISM OF MUSIC.

352. Music is a woman.

The nature of woman is love; but this love is one of conceiving, and of unreserved devotion in conception.

Woman only attains to full individuality at the moment of this devotion. She is the Undine; **Music's** gliding soulless through the waves of **Feminine** her element, and only receiving her soul **Affinity.** through love of a man. The look of innocence in the eye of the woman is the endlessly clear mirror in which the man can perceive only a general capacity for loving, until he has been able to discern his own picture therein. In that instant, the general capacity of the woman to love is condensed into a pressing necessity for loving him; and this with the unlimited strength of the fullest zeal in devotion.

353. The true woman loves—because she *must* love. She has no choice; except where she does not love. Where she must love, however, she experiences a powerful constraining force; by which, for the first time, her will is developed. The revolt of the will against this constraining force is the first and strongest motion of the individuality of the beloved object; and this, passing by conception to the woman, gifts her with individuality and will. This is the woman's pride; which only accrues to her by power of the individuality which has gained her love, and now compels her by its necessity. She thus contends, for the sake of the loved conception,

even against the constraining force of love itself; until, under the influence of this constraining force, she becomes aware that, like her pride, this is only a due carrying-out of the natural force of the same conceiving individuality; that love and the beloved object are one; that, without love, she has neither power nor will; and that, from the very moment when she first felt pride, she was already subdued. The open acknowledgment of this subjugation then becomes the active sacrifice attending the woman's final act of devotion; her pride rises consciously into the one thing which she permits herself to feel; which she is even able either to feel or think—into what she is, herself, in fact—into the love for this man.

354. A woman who does not love with this pride of devotion does not truly love at all. A woman who does not love, however, is the most unworthy and repulsive object which the world contains. Let us review the characteristic types of such women.

355. Italian opera-music has been very aptly described as a harlot. A woman of this kind may

<b>Italian Opera and its Feminine Affinity.</b>	boast of always remaining herself; for she never gets beyond self, or, in any way, sacrifices herself, except for purposes of pleasure or profit; and, even then, for the enjoyment of a stranger, she only offers up that portion of her being of which she can the more lightly dispose, as it has become to her merely an object of caprice. At the love-caresses of the harlot, it is not the woman who is present; but only a part of her physical organism. The love itself which she receives imparts no individuality; on the
---	---



contrary, she gives herself, quite generally, and again and again, to the generality. The harlot is, therefore, a woman alike uncared for and undeveloped; though, at least, she exercises the physical functions of a female, by which we—though reluctantly—recognise that she is a woman.

356. French opera-music, on the other hand, counts justly as a coquette. The coquette is

**French  
Opera  
and its  
Feminine  
Affinity.**

charmed at being admired—it may be, even loved; but she can only revel in her peculiar joy at this love, or admiration, while she avoids being caught by admiration, or even love, for the object in whom she has inspired these feelings. The gain she has in view is one of personal enjoyment; consisting of the gratification of vanity. To be admired and loved constitutes her ideal enjoyment of life; and this would be irretrievably disturbed from the moment of feeling admiration or love for another.

357. By the act of loving, the coquette would be deprived of the enjoyment of herself; for, in love, she must necessarily forget herself and devote herself to the painful and often suicidal enjoyment of another. There is nothing against which, therefore, the coquette protects herself so strongly as love; for the only thing which she loves, in the sense of desiring to maintain it undisturbed, is herself; or, in other words, her being; the seductive power and exercised individuality of which were first derived from the love-approaches of the man; from whom she—the coquette—withholds his own property.

358. The coquette lives therefore a life of thievish egotism; the mainspring of which is an icy

coldness. In her, the womanly nature is perverted to its repulsive opposite; and the cold smile she gives us, and which seems like a distorted reflection of ourselves, may even cause us to turn to the Italian courtesan.

359. But there is still another type of degenerate woman; one which fills us with a frightful horror—

**German** and that is, the prude; by which title  
**Opera** we wish to convey the idea of so-called  
**and its** "German"\* opera-music. It may hap-  
**Feminine** pen to the courtesan to experience the  
**Affinity.** sacrificing glow of love for the young man who is embracing her (the God and the Bayadère, for instance); and, even to the coquette, who is always playing with love, it may happen that, in this play, she gets herself so closely entangled that, in spite of all resistance of her vanity, she finds herself imprisoned by the net, in which she now can only weepingly deplore the loss of her selfish will. That beautiful human feeling, however, never comes to the woman who guards her purity with an orthodox

---

\* Under the term "German" opera, I do not, of course, here intend to signify that of Weber; but that particular modern manifestation of which we speak the more, as we see it less—something like the "German empire." The peculiarity of this kind of opera consists in its being the manufactured concoction of those modern German composers who cannot manage to set French or Italian texts (the only thing which prevents them from writing French and Italian operas) and to whom it affords, by way of additional comfort the vain supposition of having been able to bring something quite special and select to the light of day—seeing that they understand music so much better than either the Italians or the French. (Original note.)

fanaticism—to the woman whose virtue consists, fundamentally, in lovelessness.

360. Brought up under rules of propriety, the prude has, from childhood, only heard the word "love" pronounced with a sly distrust. She enters the world with a heart full of dogma; looks shyly round her; and, perceiving the harlot and coquette, she smites her pious breast, exclaiming: "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not like these." Propriety is the mainspring of her life; and the denial of love her only will; the only love of which she has any knowledge being that either of the courtesan or coquette. Her virtue lies in the avoidance of crime, her acts are all unfruitfulness, and her soul an impertinent type of arrogance.

361. Yet, how near is this very woman, of all others, to the most disgusting fall! For though, within her bigot-heart, love never finds a place, yet, in her carefully covered-up flesh, there lurks a vulgar sensual lust. We know all about the conventicles of the pious; and the towns, so worthy of honourable mention, in which the flowers of "Muckerei" bloomed.\* We have seen the prude, as she fell into the crime of those French and Italian sisters—adding to it the further crime of

---

\* The reference to the sect of the "Muckers" can cause no surprise, as Wagner was employed at Königsberg while the trial of the two leaders, Diestil and Ebel, for immoral practices, was proceeding. Ten years after "Opera and Drama" was written, their innocence of the charges brought against them was completely established. (Translator.)

hypocrisy; and, unfortunately, without even a trace of originality.

362. Let us turn away from this horrible spectacle; and, now, inquire—what kind of woman should true music be?

This kind of woman is one who truly loves, whose virtue is in her pride, whose pride is in her sacrifice, and whose sacrifice is one to **True Opera** which, not a part, but the whole, of her **and its** being in the richest fullness of its capacity, is devoted—in conception. What **Feminine** is received—that joyfully and gladly to bear—such **Affinity.** is the woman's deed; in order to effect which she requires only to be quite what she is, and altogether to avoid the act of willing anything whatever; seeing that one thing alone lies within the scope of any such desire; and that is, the act of willing—*to be a woman!*

363. Woman stands, therefore, to man in the relation of a clear and recognisable standard for natural certainty of judgment; for the reason that, in her perfect state, she never emerges from the circle of that beautiful instinctiveness which is allotted to her by the necessity of loving, as that which is alone capable of gifting her with soul.

364. And, here, I would again recall that noble musician with whom music was entirely that which, in a man, it is capable of being; music in perfect accordance with the fullness of its being—music, which is music, and nothing else.

Look at Mozart! Was he the less a musician because he was one so exclusively and thoroughly; because he, moreover, neither could nor would be

anything else than a musician? Or, if we take "Don Juan," where has music displayed such rich individuality, or been able to express itself characteristically with such sureness and certainty, or such superabundantly rich fullness, as in this work; in which the musician was content to act according to the nature of his art; and did not, in the least, desire to be anything else than a woman—loving unconditionally.

---

#### THE FRUCTIFYING AGENCY.

365. We stop, however, purposely at this place; in order to put the fundamental inquiry, as to who the man ought to be, whom the woman must so unconditionally love?

Before we cede the woman's love, let us ponder well over the important question—whether the man's love in return should be one in which he yields to her advances; or not, rather, one which to him also is necessary and redeeming!

We shall therefore closely consider—the

POET.

## NOTE.

*Wagner's "Opera and Drama" consists in the original of three parts, of which two are here contained, forming Volume I of the translation by Edwin Evans, Senior.*

*The remaining or third part of Wagner's "Opera and Drama" (treating of Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future) will be found in Volume II, together with comprehensive Tables of Contents for the entire work.*

anything else than a musician? Or, if we take "Don Juan," where has music displayed such rich individuality, or been able to express itself characteristically with such sureness and certainty, or such superabundantly rich fullness, as in this work; in which the musician was content to act according to the nature of his art; and did not, in the least, desire to be anything else than a woman—loving unconditionally.

---

#### THE FRUCTIFYING AGENCY.

365. We stop, however, purposely at this place; in order to put the fundamental inquiry, as to who the man ought to be, whom the woman must so unconditionally love?

Before we cede the woman's love, let us ponder well over the important question—whether the man's love in return should be one in which he yields to her advances; or not, rather, one which to him also is necessary and redeeming!

We shall therefore closely consider—the

POET.

## NOTE.

*Wagner's "Opera and Drama" consists in the original of three parts, of which two are here contained, forming Volume I of the translation by Edwin Evans, Senior.*

*The remaining or third part of Wagner's "Opera and Drama" (treating of Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future) will be found in Volume II, together with comprehensive Tables of Contents for the entire work.*



anything else than a musician? Or, if we take "Don Juan," where has music displayed such rich individuality, or been able to express itself characteristically with such sureness and certainty, or such superabundantly rich fullness, as in this work; in which the musician was content to act according to the nature of his art; and did not, in the least, desire to be anything else than a woman—loving unconditionally.

---

#### THE FRUCTIFYING AGENCY.

365. We stop, however, purposely at this place; in order to put the fundamental inquiry, as to who the man ought to be, whom the woman must so unconditionally love?

Before we cede the woman's love, let us ponder well over the important question—whether the man's love in return should be one in which he yields to her advances; or not, rather, one which to him also is necessary and redeeming!

We shall therefore closely consider—the

POET.

## NOTE.

*Wagner's "Opera and Drama" consists in the original of three parts, of which two are here contained, forming Volume I of the translation by Edwin Evans, Senior.*

*The remaining or third part of Wagner's "Opera and Drama" (treating of Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future) will be found in Volume II, together with comprehensive Tables of Contents for the entire work.*



---

THE STAGE-PLAY  
AND  
DRAMATICAL POETIC-ART IN THE ABSTRACT.

---



THE STAGE-PLAY  
AND  
DRAMATICAL POETIC-ART  
IN THE ABSTRACT

BEING PART II OF  
OPERA AND DRAMA  
BY  
RICHARD WAGNER



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO PART II.

VARIOUS characteristics special to this second part of Wagner's OPERA AND DRAMA render it necessary to make some additions to the observations by which the first part was introduced.

The reason for this is that, in the first part, the questions dealt with were principally those of fact, speculations there indulged being not only subordinate in respect of amount of text involved, but secondary also in character—as serving principally the purpose of illustration.

In the present Part, however, the case is different. Here indeed there are also facts; but they are facts which, instead of forming a texture of their own, are rather to be regarded as central points of interest. Surrounding them are lengthy dissertations and metaphysical inquiries extensive in mere textual dimension, but more extensive still when the range of thought comprised by them is considered.

The first reflection, therefore, proper to be addressed to those who, from whatever cause, may be inclined to deem the work of Wagner outdrawn is that all such judgment is necessarily in opposi-



tion to the true verdict upon a work the contents of which could not by any possibility be more condensed. Words of wisdom rising to the dignity of aphorism herein, moreover, so literally crowd that full justice would require their being separately collected as such—after the manner, for example, sometimes adopted in the case of Goethe; whilst the intellectual material is so abundant that it would have largely justified an increase in bulk—a fact also deserving to be taken into account in connection with the question of difficulty of style.

In introducing the first part frank confession was made of this difficulty, which it must be admitted applies with double force to the section now before us. It may be true that it is often a difficulty only in appearance; but such views are not likely to convince the real student, who will naturally judge by the extent of mental effort required in his own case. But, on the other hand, he will see how largely Wagner is justified by the fact that much of the difficulty arises from our own prejudices, preconceived opinions or associations—no matter what may be the term by which we choose to designate those influences which prevent us from seeing things as they really are. Such influences, moreover, must not be confounded with frank differences of view, which, when sincere, offer no obstacle to the due consideration of an opposite reasoning. Wagner's stipulation is evidently not that the reader shall agree with him; but merely that he shall approach the subject with an open mind.

This openness of mind is obviously a trait which it is beyond the power of any translator to influence,

but the whole purpose of the present version is that, providing the reader comes already possessed of it, he shall encounter no special difficulty. In the accomplishment of this purpose it was first necessary to recognise that the English reader is mostly disinclined to the infinite painstaking by which the German is characterised; and further that a large amount of the labour which the German undergoes in order to unravel the beautiful plan of Wagner's work is entirely unnecessary. To be obliged to read it through, for example, before possibly grasping its arrangement besides being ever afterwards doomed to an intense difficulty in locating its manifold contents—are hindrances which, in the case of so serious a work, have already made themselves felt even in Germany; as may be judged by the appearance of various plans undertaken to avoid them.

In this connection we must not only remember that it was natural for the author, from his own superior standpoint, to disregard the necessity for assistance, but also take into account the extreme rapidity with which the work was originally produced, resulting in Wagner's own expressed consciousness of the difficulty presented. Objection cannot therefore be taken to the principle of endeavouring to remove the latter; though criticism may apply to the discretion (or indiscretion as the case may be) displayed in course of carrying out the method adopted. The details of this method having been given in introducing the first Part need not here be repeated, though it may be pleaded that the work of naming the various divisions and sub-

tion to the true verdict upon a work the contents of which could not by any possibility be more condensed. Words of wisdom rising to the dignity of aphorism herein, moreover, so literally crowd that full justice would require their being separately collected as such—after the manner, for example, sometimes adopted in the case of Goethe; whilst the intellectual material is so abundant that it would have largely justified an increase in bulk—a fact also deserving to be taken into account in connection with the question of difficulty of style.

In introducing the first part frank confession was made of this difficulty, which it must be admitted applies with double force to the section now before us. It may be true that it is often a difficulty only in appearance; but such views are not likely to convince the real student, who will naturally judge by the extent of mental effort required in his own case. But, on the other hand, he will see how largely Wagner is justified by the fact that much of the difficulty arises from our own prejudices, preconceived opinions or associations—no matter what may be the term by which we choose to designate those influences which prevent us from seeing things as they really are. Such influences, moreover, must not be confounded with frank differences of view, which, when sincere, offer no obstacle to the due consideration of an opposite reasoning. Wagner's stipulation is evidently not that the reader shall agree with him; but merely that he shall approach the subject with an open mind.

This openness of mind is obviously a trait which it is beyond the power of any translator to influence,

but the whole purpose of the present version is that, providing the reader comes already possessed of it, he shall encounter no special difficulty. In the accomplishment of this purpose it was first necessary to recognise that the English reader is mostly disinclined to the infinite painstaking by which the German is characterised; and further that a large amount of the labour which the German undergoes in order to unravel the beautiful plan of Wagner's work is entirely unnecessary. To be obliged to read it through, for example, before possibly grasping its arrangement besides being ever afterwards doomed to an intense difficulty in locating its manifold contents—are hindrances which, in the case of so serious a work, have already made themselves felt even in Germany; as may be judged by the appearance of various plans undertaken to avoid them.

In this connection we must not only remember that it was natural for the author, from his own superior standpoint, to disregard the necessity for assistance, but also take into account the extreme rapidity with which the work was originally produced, resulting in Wagner's own expressed consciousness of the difficulty presented. Objection cannot therefore be taken to the principle of endeavouring to remove the latter; though criticism may apply to the discretion (or indiscretion as the case may be) displayed in course of carrying out the method adopted. The details of this method having been given in introducing the first Part need not here be repeated, though it may be pleaded that the work of naming the various divisions and sub-

divisions has been carried out with a sufficient sense of awe at the bare possibility of misconstruction to form by itself some guarantee. But, however that may be, it is quite safe to assume the exterior aspect now imparted to the work to be one very greatly facilitating an intelligent approach to it; and in the English student's interest a word of reference to the translation itself is now desirable.

A principal care has been to dispense altogether with un-English expressions, temptation to the use of which is so likely to occur in the commendable desire of adhering closely to the German collocation. But this desire, however commendable from the school point of view, should be held secondary to that of giving effect to Wagner's own extreme earnestness to be clearly and generally understood: especially as this result is quite possible without any practical sacrifice of fidelity at all. Should the few microscopic divergences which have occurred in the interest of the English reader provide pedants with a little harmless occupation, that will be quite a small affair in comparison with realisation of the all-important object of being freely understood by the ordinary English musical reader. The first condition for this realisation was not to assume from him any specialities of linguistic refinement—or in fact anything whatever beyond what might fairly be assumed for the perusal of a work of similar kind, if originally written in English.

But, although general favour may be assumed for whatever may assist a flowing perusal, there are a few special features of translation which seem to claim a closer reference. These will nevertheless be

dealt with as shortly as possible, and the account of them may even be passed over by the reader for whom it fails to present any peculiar interest.

Wagner makes an extremely free use of the subordinate phrase at all times; and this feature, added to his eloquent employment of the long-drawn adjectival expression peculiar to the German language, produces the result that a perfectly fluent original would very often have issued in a stilted English, had the mere letter of the text been preferred to its obvious spirit and meaning.

The workings of the German mind are however so akin to our own habit that, in such cases, it is merely the outward dress which separates the expression from that with which we are familiar; and the reader has only to refer to those special passages which display the author's mental attitude towards the subject of articulate speech in order to discover that he regarded the latter's modern complication as an attribute to be frankly, however regretfully, accepted. For this reason it was evidently not a defect which he could be expected to be at pains to modify, and we have to bear this in mind when endeavouring to carry his message to those who may view articulate speech quite differently—those who, from their own point of view, might incline to regard all complication as proceeding from a totally different cause.

It should also be mentioned that the Saxon basis of our language is apt to present a temptation to repeat the German collocation in cases where, at first sight, a literal reproduction would seem to be obviously desirable. Nothing could of course be

better in the case of words the signification of which have remained entirely the same. But experience shows this to be by no means always the case; and that, in the result, that which first bears the appearance of a facility often proves to be ultimately the reverse. Sometimes, indeed, the terse German expression, though existent in our tongue, is altogether unsuited to our habit; for it must be remembered that the latter, though not usually favouring circumlocution so much as the German, nevertheless indulges in it at certain times when the German does not.

It will be sufficient to say that, generally speaking, while clinging to the original construction in every way consistent with its presentment in English, that course has not been pursued to the extent of endangering the main objects in view; and that these considerations, though bearing an outward connection with the mere act of translation, are more directly concerned with mental concentration upon the work itself in the essential sense. This desire to concentrate upon the actual task in hand will also explain why the annotations, already reduced in number by the copious means of cross-reference provided for the reader's use, are furthermore strictly confined to points in the main reasoning, and to the most essential particulars of other kinds; the conviction being that this work of Wagner's contains so wide a range of thought that the sheer obligation is imposed upon us of strictly adhering to its main course. It not only enlightens us upon its own special subject, but it also enables us to understand the fruitless gropings of German poets and phil-

osophers who, though addressing themselves to the same class of endeavour, failed to grasp the broader bearings of the problems to the solution of which they were devoted. The instructiveness of the references to Schiller and Goethe, for example, extends far beyond the illustration of Wagner's own immediate subject; for the reason that it also enables us to understand and sympathise with the efforts of those (and of other) world-heroes in a higher sense than in all probability we had previously experienced. It would scarcely be going too far were we to doubt whether any commentary upon the course of poetical and dramatic literature exists which can, in this sense, compete with the present work—so far as affording a clear insight into the historical drift of the whole communication with human feeling is concerned.

The attention of the reader is also directed to the fact that, although throughout the reasoning there is a constant air of metaphysical speculation, yet, the conclusions arrived at are invariably and in every detail borne out by recorded fact. This does not merely apply to the broader matter—such, for example, as the freedom of the Shakespeare stage from scenic obligations; but is equally true in the case of such events of lesser import as the fruitless endeavour of Goethe to render “*Götz von Berlichingen*” more suited for stage use. In whichever way we turn we are met with dissertations which, at first appearing desultory, gradually take form; and acquire at last a greater precision, until we are finally introduced to an illustrative array of fact by which the whole is made clear; so that, in one



sense, the book, although a treatise, may be regarded as a map upon which to locate our immediate subject, and thus become enabled to perceive its relation to others. Thus, to take a case in point, the position of Gluck in musical history is accurately established, and the same of course applies to other instances innumerable.

It is right perhaps, in conclusion, to mention another peculiar interest attaching to the present section—that, namely, which arose on account of the contained allusions to politics and religion the nature of which rendered them peculiarly liable to be misread and to give cause for trouble to the author himself.

It appears that certain matter-of-fact persons inclined to read Wagner's allusions to "Downfall of the State" in quite a different sense to that in which he had intended them; a circumstance which at any rate had the beneficial effect of exhausting the first edition, and of necessitating the reprint as dedicated to Constantin Frantz. To the latter Wagner gives a complete account of the whole circumstance, and concludes by saying that:

In order to issue with comfort from this embarrassment he gladly lent himself to the view of having had no evil design; and that, after thinking the matter well over, he had really no objection to the State going on as usual.\*

It is not apprehended that the present reader is likely to allow himself to be startled in the same way though the reminder may serve to indicate the existence of a category of allusions, in respect

---

\* See Dedication to Constantin Frantz (Volume I).

of one or other of which a certain sensitiveness might be occasionally excited. Thus, there are certain references to Christianity which must obviously be restricted to their bearing upon artistic influences; as may also be said of the comparison drawn between the Christian miracle and the element of the marvellous in Romance and Drama—in short, the general bearing and intent of the work must be held paramount if the full benefit of its perusal is to be enjoyed.

Finally, the stage at which we have now arrived is that of having completed Wagner's approach to the third and most important section; for, whilst each part of the work is complete in itself, and the three are gradually progressive, the first and second are collectively to be taken as an introduction to the third.

EDWIN EVANS, SENIOR.



## INTRODUCTION.

### EPITOME.

(1) Lessing's comparison of plastic delineation and verbal description. (2) Limitations of the plastic arts. (3) Strict observance of these limitations a condition of purity. (4) The peculiar dependence of plastic art upon the imaginative power. (5) Disadvantage to which each art is subject in a state of separation from others. (6) Confusion resulting from crude admixtures in art. (7) Wilful misconstructions placed upon the conception of union of the arts. (8) Such conclusions in opposition to Lessing's argument. (9) Misconceptions of drama proceeding from the same cause. (10) Melodrama no more a real drama than is the pianoforte an orchestra. (11) The egoistical tendency as basis alike of literary drama and the prevalence of clavier. (12) Pre-eminence of the human voice as musical instrument. (13) Gradual decay in musical power of expression. (14) Course of the introduction of various musical means. (15) The voice insufficiently pandering to the egoistical tendency through being restricted to melodic utterance. (16) Wind instruments under equal disadvantage of restriction to melodic utterance. (17) The organ an expressionless combination of wind instruments. (18) Modern art limited to abstract results. (19) Result of inquiry into these abuses is return to expression of the human voice.



## INTRODUCTION.

### RELATING TO ART-WORK AND THE LITERARY DRAMA.

1. LESSING, when endeavouring in his *Laocoön* to seek out and indicate the limits of poetry and *Lessing* and painting, had that kind of poetry in his *Laocoön*. view only which aspires to mere description. He begins by adopting divisions and comparisons which he sets up between the scene of the death struggle of *Laocoön*, as presented to us by the plastic forms involved, and the description given of it by Virgil in his *Æneid*, an epic poem intended for mere perusal.\* Whenever he mentions even

---

\* *Laocoön*, the priest of Poseidon, warned the Trojans of the deceit practised by the Greeks in their pretended offerings of the wooden horse to Minerva; and was destroyed, along with his two sons, by two enormous serpents, which came from the sea. The following is from Dryden's translation of Virgil's *Æneid*:

Two serpents, ranked abreast, the seas divide	And first around the tender boys they wind,
And smoothly sweep along the swelling tide.	Then with their sharpened fangs their limbs and bodies grind.
Their nimble tongues they bran- dished as they came	The wretched father, running to their aid
And licked their hissing jaws that sputtered flame.	With pious haste, but vain, they next invade:
We fled amazed; their destined way they take,	Twice round his waist their wind- ing volumes rolled;
And to <i>Laocoön</i> and his children make:	And twice about his gasping throat they fold.

(Translator's note.)

Sophocles in the course of his inquiry it is evident, too, that it is merely works of the literary Sophocles (in the condition in which they stand before us at the present day) that he has in mind; so that even when making special mention of the tragedies of this poet, he instinctively places them outside all comparison with either sculpture or painting.

2. The reason for this is that, although the living tragedy shows no limitation when compared with either sculpture or painting, the comparison at once exposes the pitiful nature of these latter plastic arts, due to the inherent restrictions to which they are subject. On no occasion of his mentioning the domain and the restrictions of poetry does Lessing intend to refer to the dramatic art-work, brought into immediate view and within reach of our physical perceptions—that art-work which unites within itself all the features of plastic art, besides carrying these to higher perfections otherwise unattainable, and conferring thereby upon the special art to which they belong a higher artistic object of existence. On the contrary, he means that miserable shadow of such an art-work which consists merely of the literary poem, and which addresses its description or narration not to the senses at all, but only to the power of imagination—thus rendering the latter the real means of representation to the mind, and its position one of being simply incited to action by the text.

3. Such factitious art, so far as it accomplishes any effect at all, can only do so by the most scrupu-

**Relative** lous observance of bounds and limits.\*  
**Vocation of** This happens because of the necessity for  
**Imagination** and caution, lest the unlimited range of  
**the Senses.** imagination (which is now replacing art  
 by becoming the real performer) exceed the intended  
 limit and become confused, and lest it fail, on the  
 other hand, to be held to the main point—where all  
 that concerns the main subject has necessarily to be  
 made as clear and unmistakable as possible.

4. This exclusive recourse to the power of imagination is common to all the arts when applied singly; and peculiarly applies to the plastic arts as entirely dependent upon the appeal to Fancy for effecting that most important of all artistic objects—the presentation to the mind of the idea of motion. All such arts merely indicate. A real presentation could only become possible to them in the event of their possessing the power of simultaneously addressing the whole range of man's artistic sensations—of communicating with his entire perceptive organism, and not merely to his power of imagination; for the real work of art is shown precisely by its advance beyond the region of imagination into that of reality in which the senses are directly affected.

---

\* These bounds and limits may perhaps be gathered from the result at which Lessing professedly arrives in course of his work, and which is stated in the introduction to the Hempel edition of *Laocoön* in the following terms:

"The subject proper to plastic art consists of bodies; from the condition of which actions have to be divined. On the other hand, that proper to poetry consists of actions by which an indication is conveyed of the condition of the bodies concerned; and the latter should, therefore, not be specially described by the poet." (Translator's note.)



5. Lessing's honourable attempt to fix the respective limits of the separated descriptions of art (which **Limitations of the Arts** do not immediately represent at all, but can only indicate) is nowadays most **unseparately** intelligently misconstrued—by those to whom the immense distinction between such arts and the only real kind of Art still remains a mystery. As a consequence of their only having those separate art-varieties in view which are incapable of immediate representation to the senses, they are obliged to regard the object of each one (and therefore of Art in general) as that of overcoming the difficulty of providing the imaginative power, by means of description, with a firm point of vantage; and with the least possible disturbance. To accumulate the means to this end is, however, easily capable of confusing the description in view, by diverting the fancy from its grasp of the object to be depicted; as the introduction of disproportionate methods is only liable to trouble it, and to cause its attention to be divided.

6. In the arts individually, therefore, purity is the first condition of their being understood; whilst, on the other hand, all mixture of varieties of **Union of Art Varieties** art must necessarily obscure this clearness. Thus, whilst nothing can strike us as more confusing than, for example, the attempt of a painter to represent his subject in any kind of motion only possible to the poet to describe; the effect upon us becomes utterly repulsive if, in a picture, the poet's lines are shown as issuing from a person's mouth.

7. When the musician—the absolute musician,

that is—tries to paint, what he produces is neither music nor a painting. Should he, however, desire to accompany the exhibition of a painting with his music, he might be quite sure that neither the painting nor his music would be intelligible. Whoever is incapable of understanding the union of art-varieties into one great art (in any other sense than to suppose it to consist, for example, of reading a romance by Goethe, in a picture gallery adorned with statues, during the performance of a Beethoven symphony)\* is undoubtedly quite right in stipulating for separation of the arts; and for having it left entirely to each one to give the clearest possible description of its subject—the description which is natural to it.

8. That, however, our modern æstheticists should first assign the drama to the category of art-*varieties*

**Music in** and then proceed to treat it as specially  
**Relation to** appertaining to the poet—that they should  
**the Literary** even do this in the sense of implying  
**Drama.**

thereby that the association with it of another art (such as that of music) is one requiring excuse—not only lacks all justification but is equivalent to basing upon the Lessing definition conclusions which it contains absolutely nothing to uphold.

---

\* (Original note.) Such, indeed, is the way in which childish and would-be clever *literati* picture to themselves the “unified art-work” which I described, when they profess to feel obliged to regard the latter as a “confused heap” of the several art-varieties. But a Saxon critic deems it suitable treatment to catch at my appeal to the senses as coarse sensuality; by which, of course, he means carnal desires. The silliness of these æsthetes is only to be explained by imputing to them a lying intention.

9. The people who think in this way simply regard the drama as a subdivision of literature; a kind of poetry upon similar footing with the romantic or didactic styles of poem; the only difference being that, instead of being merely read, it is learned by heart, and afterwards recited by several persons—being also accompanied by gesture, and set off by theatrical illumination.

10. In any case music, in its relation to a literary drama placed upon the stage, would stand very much as if it were applied to the exhibition of a painting; and the so-called melodrama is, therefore, justifiably rejected as a species consisting of the most uncomfortable mixture. This kind of drama, which our *litterati* have exclusively in view is, however, no more a real drama than is a keyboard instrument an orchestra;\* or, in extreme case, a chorus.

11. The same egoistical tendency which is evidenced in our entire art-development has given rise both to the literary drama and to the  
**Course of**  
**Progress:** prevalence of the use of keyboard in-  
**Voice** struments. I will, therefore, make its  
**to Clavier.** course clear in a few words, by taking the latter as an example.

12. The oldest, the purest and the most beautiful instrument of music—the instrument to which alone our music owes its very existence is

*the human voice.*

The most natural step was to imitate this by means

---

\* (Original note.) The violin, when combined with the piano, no more unites with it than does music unite with the literary drama when combined with it.

of a wind instrument, this being followed up by the stringed instrument; after which the symphonic combination of both wind and stringed instruments was further imitated by the organ—the latter, on account of its clumsiness, finally giving way to the more easily handled pianoforte.

13. In this connection, the first thing to be observed is the continual decay of musical power of expression which took place in this course of progress from the human voice (as the original musical instrument) to the clavier, as described.

14. Orchestral instruments had started off with a total loss of the power of vocal articulation; though they could still fairly well imitate the voice in its inexhaustibly manifold and ever-varying power of expression. Organ pipes, on the other hand, could only so far imitate the voice as to reproduce its equal duration of tone, entirely failing to secure at the same time its changefulness of utterance. Then came the pianoforte, which could only, as it were, *indicate* even the duration of tone—leaving the substance of it to be supplied by the hearer's imagination. Thus it is that in the clavier we have an instrument which merely outlines music.

15. What, then, was the reason to induce musicians finally to settle down to such a toneless in-

**Clavier** instrument? There was no other cause for **Prevalence** this than the fact that it supplied the **Explained.** means of making music by itself, that it was self-sufficient and independent of the co-operation of other instruments. The human voice which, considered as a voice, can only be used in conjunction with speech, and is then restricted to melodic

utterance, is an Individual; requiring the organised assistance of several similar units for the production of symphonic harmony.

16. Both wind and stringed instruments stood very near to the voice in this respect, for they, also, retained the individual character; and however richly modulating might be their quality of tone, they were still restricted to one given note, and were, therefore, dependent upon the assistance of other instruments for the production of harmonic effects.

17. These living individualities had already been arranged into rows of lifeless pipes, and placed under the control of one single and indivisible player, by means of the stop register in the organ of the Christian church; thus raising their mechanically produced voices to the honour and glory of God, in due response to key pressure; but whereas the organist was still dependent upon a bellows-blower, the *virtuose* upon the piano could set any number of striking hammers in motion entirely on his own account, and to the listener (now compelled to give up all idea of a music consisting of real tone) all the interest remaining was to admire the dexterity with which all this was done.

18. How truly, therefore, our modern art is like **Clavier and the pianoforte**. Each unit attempts the **Modern Art**; work of many; but, unfortunately, with an **Analogy** only abstract and toneless results. We have hammers—but no men!

19. The intention is now to follow up the inquiry into this literary drama, the entrance to which is so barred to noble inspired music by the puritanical high-mindedness of our æsthetes; and to do so from

the clavier point of view\* tracing the latter to its origin. And what shall we gain? Our final stage will be to find ourselves in presence of the tone of human speech, which is identical with that of human song, and without which we should never have even so much as heard of either clavier or literary drama.

---

\* (Original note.) It strikes me as not without importance that the very clavier *virtuose* who has carried, nowadays, keyboard execution to its extremest height—the wonderful Franz Liszt—is now applying his gigantic energy to orchestral real tone; and, in so doing, is practically turning to the living human voice.



## CHAPTER I.

### EPITOME.

#### MODERN DRAMA.

---

##### *The Twofold Origin of the Drama.*

(20) Origin of modern Drama partly in our own historic development and partly in the rules of Aristotle. (21) Treatment by modern poets of romantic material by Grecian rule. (22) The Shakespeare play and Racine's tragedies as opposites.

---

##### *Romance and Shakespeare.*

(23) Expiration of the Middle Age as an epoch in Art. (24) Characteristics of the same. (25) Mediæval plastic and poetic art. (26) Mediæval poetry. (27) Its immense range. (28) Absence of all attempt at expression of Man's inner nature. (29) Methods of the mediæval poet in diverting attention from the subject. (30) Traces of the striving of human feeling. (31) Traits of the dawn of the new period. (32) Importance of the transition from Romance to Drama. (33) The Drama of the Future. (34) Shakespeare's procedure. (35) The means at Shakespeare's disposal. (36) Stage conditions of Shakespeare's time. (37) Shakespeare's limitation of space employed. (38) His limitation of duration of performance. (39) The Shakespeare standard for time and space. (40) Facilities of the Romance as compared with Drama. (41) Primitive conditions of the Shakespeare stage. (42) Shakespeare influence of imaginative scenery. (43) The leading feature of perfect art-production. (44) The confusion subsequent to Shakespeare. (45) Long continued increase of the same.



*The Greek Drama and Racine.*

(46) The strivings of human feeling more evident among Germanic than Romanic nations. (47) Romanic leaning to plastic art. (48) Romanic preference for Roman and Greek models. (49) Stability of the scene. (50) Distaste for the exercise of Fantasy. (51) The French drama's standard of unity. (52) Limitation of subject-range. (53) French drama driven to imitation of Antique. (54) Beauty of speech principal feature in France and Italy. (55) Gluck as musical exponent of this style.

---

*The Modern Literature Drama.*

(56) Rise in Germany of the modern drama. (57) Catholic and Protestant influences. (58) Contrast between German and the Romanic nations in respect of modern drama. (59) Introduction of Opera into Germany. (60) Contrast of musical and ordinary drama. (61) Common tendency of the spectacular show and unified scene. (62) The poet detached from these effects. (63) The poet's renunciation of complicated means. (64) Shakespeare as illustration. (65) The limit of Shakespeare's discovery. (66) Presentation of the local scene. (67) Difficulties of its adoption in Germany. (68) The modification of Shakespeare's work to accommodate change of scene. (69) Objections from the literary standpoint. (70) The two methods of Shakespearean representation. (71) Injury to Shakespeare's work as literature by full scenic display. (72) Confusing effect of same. (73) The two results of this confusion upon the modern poet.

---

*Goethe, Schiller and their Successors.*

(74) Goethe's dramatisation of the knightly romance. (75) Dramatisation of the domestic romance. (76) Goethe and the literary poem. (77) Goethe at the parting of the ways. (78) Indecisive result of same. (79) The formative influence of "Faust" upon Goethe's later work. (80) Goethe turns to the Greek model. (81) Impossibility of its use to illustrate the Romance. (82) Goethe resorts to Greek material. (83) Goethe's procedure in "Iphigenia" compared with that of Beethoven. (84) Goethe's relinquishment of the Greek model when endeavouring to portray real life. (85) His

return to means of mere description. (86) His success in the adoption of this means. (87) Schiller's dramatisation of the Romance and of History. (88) Traits of the Shakespearean historic model. (89) Schiller's difficulty in reconciling Shakespeare's non-scenic stage with modern requirements. (90) Schiller and "historical drama." (91) The difficulty of "historical drama" described. (92) Barren results of the attempt to poetise History. (93) Evasion and distortion of historic truth. (94) Schiller's task impossible. (95) His obligation to supplement one work by another as explanatory. (96) Distinction between this proceeding and that of Shakespeare in dividing his historic plays. (97) The influence of Schiller's experience upon his later work. (98) Schiller, like Goethe, resorts to the Greek model. (99) His adaptation of the "Fate" of Grecian tragedy to mediæval subjects. (100) Schiller's "Bride of Messina" and its relation to Goethe's "Faust." (101) Failure to realise either mediæval romance or ancient form. (102) Schiller returns to dramatised Romance in "William Tell." (103) Schiller's two contending aspirations—the poetic element of modern life and the finished form of Grecian drama. (104) Schiller's search for the Ideal. (105) His conception of Art as detached from Life. (106) Schiller's dilemma between ancient form and present-day practical romance. (107) The two outcomes of the new style of dramatic poetic art founded upon the attempts of Goethe and Schiller. (108) Survey of the foregoing. (109) The Romance an intelligible form. (110) The dramatised Romance an amplification and attempted realisation. (111) The modern Stage-piece a result of the failure of the foregoing and equally a failure by its over-variety of action. (112) The return to the Romance—a reaction. (113) The literary lyric—a subject of the most varied contentions. (114) Reaction extends to frank revival of the Greek tragedy. (115) Such reaction a defiance of the needs of the present time. (116) Serves the purpose of exposing our dramatic poverty. (117) The complete non-participation of music in all such attempts.

## CHAPTER I.

### MODERN DRAMA.

---

#### THE TWO-FOLD ORIGIN OF THE DRAMA.

20. MODERN drama springs from two sources. On the one hand, we have the Romance, which is a **Greek** natural source, because it is peculiar to **Drama and** our own historical development, and on **Romance.** the other, we have the Greek Drama, which is a foreign source, because it is based upon the imperfectly understood rules of Aristotle, and, moreover, only intrudes into our development as the result of reflection.

21. The integral nucleus of our poetry consists of the Romance; in striving to render which as palatable as they could, our modern poets have again and again, in greater or less degree, lapsed into the mere imitation of the Grecian drama.

22. The choicest bloom of that kind of drama which immediately springs from the Romance is presented to us in the play of Shakespeare, the point of greatest distance from which is represented by that description to which it, in every sense, was most com-

pletely opposed—the “tragedy” of Racine. The entire remainder of our dramatic literature moves hither and thither, both yielding and undetermined, between these extreme points; and in order to scrutinise the character of this undetermined and yielding motion it will be necessary to inquire with increased precision into our drama’s natural source of existence.

---

#### ROMANCE AND SHAKESPEARE.

23. If we seek in the course of the world’s history, since the decline of Grecian art, for some period

**The Re-**affording us sufficient ground for proud  
**naissance.** self-congratulation, we alight upon that which may be described as the expiration of the Middle Age and the dawn of the modern period, and to which we commonly give the name of “Renaissance.”

24. Here we find the inner nature of Man literally exerting a giant’s strength in the endeavour to give itself expression. The entire leaven resulting from the strange combination of the Germanic individual hero-world with the proselytising spirit of Roman Catholic Christianity (thus pressing forward from man’s interior nature in its search for outward manifestation) seemed as if desiring to rid itself of all enigmatical scruple by discovery of a suitable expression of its being. On all sides we find this impetus naturally taking the form of an ardent desire for description, for entire power to unfold his

own inner nature without reserve can only be exercised by the man who is certain of his own attributes.

25. This, the artist of the Renaissance period decidedly was not; for even his grasp of exteriors **Mediæval Attempts to Express the Inner Nature.** was no more than the result of avoiding those dissensions which agitated his interior. And if, on the one hand, the impulse alluded to was most evident within the range of plastic art, it was, on the other, quite as truly present within that of Poetry. The difference here to be observed is that, whereas painting had steadily pursued the one object of picturing the living man, poetic art had already turned aside from his mere description to a presentation of the man himself, and the means it had adopted to this end was its forward step from Romance to Drama.

26. Mediæval poetry had already produced the narrative style and brought it to the highest degree of cultivation. Such poems recounted human actions (together with the incidental events and entire simultaneous motion attaching thereto) much in the same way as the painter was accustomed to proceed —by selecting the characteristic moments and bringing them prominently before us. Yet the poet's resource (considering that he dispensed with the immediate representation of his action by living men) was really quite as unlimited as that of his hearers' or readers' power of imagination, the latter being, in fact, that to which his entire appeal was addressed.

27. Such scope, moreover, caused the poet the greater temptation to engage in extraordinary groupings of events and places as his glance ranged—

ever more widely—over a continually swelling sea of exterior actions in progress, such as were wont to be produced at that adventurous period.

28. Man, who, uncertain of his own attributes, and employing Art merely in order to avoid the inner dissensions of his nature (just as he had already, and in vain, endeavoured artificially to overcome the same internal strife)\* felt no incentive to express any certainty attaching to his inner nature, preferring to select some certainty from the outer world.

29. The poet, by means of a willingness to adopt any subject of the outer world which chance might

**The Art** bring to his notice, succeeded, so to speak, **of Ariosto.** in distracting attention from his own inner nature; and the more manifold the styles and tints which he might be able to impart to the characters involved, the greater he might venture to consider his success in the involuntary object of dissipating his own misgivings. The master of this art (which however amiable in itself, must be regarded as one deprived of all expression of man's interior nature, and equally bereft of all hold upon the human soul) was Ariosto.

30. But the less these glaringly fantastic productions, even after indulgence in so much extravagance, were able to divert the inner man—and the more that man felt impelled in an opposite direction by a force proceeding from his interior being—the clearer do we perceive in the prevailing poetic style his endeavour to make himself complete master of

---

\* (Original note.) To think of the Christian poetry proper to this period will suffice to realise this idea.

the varied material so presented from within, and to extend this to its outward manifestation. His striving shows itself in the direction of focussing the interest in his creations, and of determining the middle point which is to become the axis of his artwork, and to do this by reference to his own individual view of things and in fulfilment of his firm desire to find some means whereby the inner being can find expression.

31. The means thus referred to form the fructifying material of the new period and present a closer view of individual human nature in fulfilment of a well-defined artistic purpose. **The Progress from Romance to Drama.** From out the immense crowd of exterior manifestations (which until now had seemed never sufficiently manifold and variously tinted to satisfy the poet) those which bear a relation to one another are now selected and set apart, whilst the multiplicity of motion is reduced to serve the purpose of precisely delineating the traits of the acting characters.

32. How immeasurably important we thus perceive it to be that, in all inquiry into the real nature of Art, this interior impulse of the poet, so clearly made evident, should be enabled to reach fulfilment; that it should, in fact, attain to an absolutely certain utterance by an immediate presentment to the senses; that, in short, the Romance should be replaced by the Drama! Complete control of the outer material, as a means of communicating to others the inner view taken of that material, could be attained only in one way; and that was, by presenting the very object itself in the most convincing reality for

appreciation by the senses—a way not possible to anything but Drama.

33. The Shakespeare drama itself was completely a foregone necessity of our existence, as well as of our historical development; and its creation was subject to the nature of prevailing art-conditions, just in the same way as the drama of the future, by an equally natural process, will arise for the express satisfaction of those needs which the Shakespeare drama made us aware of, but did not satisfy.

34. Shakespeare (whom we are obliged continually to think of in connection with, and as the head of, all who had preceded him) compressed the narration of the Romance into the form of drama by, in a certain sense, translating it for stage performance. In so doing he gave to actual speaking men (who, during the entire piece were identical in appearance and gesture with the leading characters), the presentation to eye and ear of all that human action which the speechful style of narrative poetry had previously merely indicated.

35. For his purpose Shakespeare found both stage and players; which were means that had hitherto escaped the poet's attention. This fruitful source of real art-work of the people had, hitherto, been as it were subterraneously concealed, though still flowing on; but, as the necessity for its use began to press upon him, it was soon revealed to his longing and inquiring glance. The characteristic of the popular show was, however, that the players were commonly regarded as merely engaged in "show"; because it was to the eye—and, with



express intention, exclusively to the eye—that they addressed themselves.\* Their open-air representations, in presence of a far-reaching crowd, were entirely dependent upon gesture for their effect; and, in gesture only, actions themselves can be expressed with certainty—the absence of speech entailing the omission of all expression of their motive.

36. Thus, the performance of such actors, by its very nature, was brimful of grotesque and over-Traits of the accumulated action; just as much as  
**Mediæval** the Romance—the excess of disconnected  
**Play.** material in which it was the very purpose of the poet to bring within smaller limits. The poet witnessing such a popular play must have found that, for want of intelligible speech, it had drifted into the same unwarrantable excess of action as the romantic poet had been obliged to adopt in consequence of being unable actually to represent his characters and the events befalling them. He must have felt inclined to say to the players:

“Give me your stage, and take my speech, to settle the matter!”

37. We now see the poet proceed in favour of the drama by reducing the limits of the folk-stage, and by adopting those of the theatre. Entirely in the same way as necessity had arisen to restrict the action (by means of selecting certain important moments best calculated to display the instigating

---

\* (Original.) “Das Characteristische dieser Volksschaubühne war aber, dass die *Schauspieler*, die daher sich auch vorzugsweise so nannten, auf ihr *dem Auge*, und absichtlich gerade fast nur dem Auge sich mittheilten.”

motives) so was there a corresponding necessity to restrict the dimensions of the space dealt with—and this more particularly in the interest of the spectator; who was now, not merely destined to look on, but also required to hear everything clearly.

38. It was not only to *space*, moreover, but also to *duration* of the dramatic piece that the same restriction had to apply. The stage of the mystery-plays of the Middle Ages (either set up in the open country or in the squares and streets of towns) invited the assembled crowd to representations lasting, not only an entire day, but, as we may even still see, several days in succession. Entire histories, or the complete events of some life-story, were thus offered; and, from these, it was free to the varying mass of spectators to select, for their enjoyment, what seemed to them to be most worthy of attention.

39. A representation of this kind was, in every sense, in keeping with the histories of the Middle Age itself; their excessive accumulation of mixed material, being just as masked and devoid of character—just as bare of individual life-incentive. The over-busy characters of histories intended for the *reader* were just as wooden and coarsely-cut as were those of the histories thus presented to the *spectator*. The same reasons which decided the poet to restrict the amount of the action and the extent of the space to be employed, caused him, therefore, also to compress the time required by the performance—his intention being now to present the spectators, not merely with detached portions, but with a play well rounded-off and complete in itself; and this compelled him to

adopt, as his standard for duration of the performance, the strength of the spectator's capability to give sustained and undivided attention to an exciting subject brought before him.

40. An art-work, such as the romance for perusal, may, on account of appealing to the imagination only, easily interrupt the flow of what it has to communicate. The reason of this is, that Fancy is of such an arbitrary nature that it recognises no law; and is entirely guided by the whim of the moment. But that which displays itself before the senses, with the view of making its communication to them with a convincing and unfailing precision, has not only to regulate itself according to the properties, capabilities and extent of power naturally possessed by such senses, but also to display itself fully from top to bottom, and from beginning to end. Otherwise, it will be obliged (as a consequence of sudden interruption or imperfection in its delivery) to supply the necessary completion by an appeal to imagination—which is precisely what it turned to the senses in order to avoid.

41. One thing alone was left to imagination in the restricted kind of stage which we are now describing—and that was, the representation of the scene itself; amid which the actors had to present themselves according to the local requirements of the action. Carpets being hung round the stage, a tablet (upon which the inscription could be easily changed) informed the spectator what he was required to picture in his mind as being the scene—whether it was a palace, a street, a wood, or a field. This appeal to Fancy

was necessitated by the stage-conditions of the period; but the effect upon drama was to cause the door to remain open to the Romance—with its over-variety of material, and to History—with its over-abundance of action.

42. If, on the one hand, the poet did not yet feel the necessity of having the scene represented in a manner absolutely true to nature (as a consequence of his having hitherto had to deal only with the representation of the romance by living, speaking persons) it was not likely that he would experience the want of restricting the action to be represented to the closer limits presented by its most important moments. This shows with the utmost clearness how, in perfecting the form of the art-work, it is only absolute necessity which compels the artist to apply to the senses rather than to fancy; and thus to give to the latter, through the senses, a sure and intelligible, in place of an uncertain, action.

43. It is this necessity which (as forming all art, and as alone possessing the power of satisfying the artist's endeavour) becomes patent to us through the certainty attaching to a broad survey engaging the entire senses; so that, if we completely act up to its requirements, we shall be carried to the most perfect kind of art-production.

44. Shakespeare did not yet feel the necessity of having the surrounding scene represented in a manner

**The  
One Short-  
coming of  
the Shake-  
speare  
Drama.**

absolutely true to nature; and, therefore, he sifted and condensed the over-abundance of the romantic material with which he had to deal—only so far as this was imposed upon him by the necessity which

he actually did feel; and which consisted of that of lessening the space employed, and of limiting the time during which the action represented by actual men was to continue. This Shakespeare, who, so far as the bounds alluded to extended, enlivened history and romance by such convincing and characteristic truth that, by his means, men were, for the first time, represented possessed of a manifold and drastic individuality which no previous poet had ever succeeded in introducing—this same Shakespeare, as a consequence of his drama's not conforming to the necessity in question, became the foundation and the point of departure of an unexampled confusion in dramatic art; a confusion enduring for two centuries, and continuing to our own day.

45. Thus, to repeat my former expression, a door had been left open in the Shakespeare drama, by means of which romance and loosely-constructed history could go in and out as they pleased: this door being the fact of the representation of the scene being left to the spectator's fancy. We shall now see that the resultant confusion grew more and more, in precisely the same degree as ruthlessness was shown in closing that door from the other side; and as acknowledged imperfections of the scene once more became the cause of arbitrary revolt against the living drama itself.

## THE GREEK DRAMA AND RACINE.

46. The Romance, with its unlimited love of adventure, throwing all Germanic and Romanic elements into one confused heap, had been the rage to the most enormous degree among the so-called Romanic nations of Europe; and it was precisely among those nations that it had become the most incapable of being dramatised. The incentive to employ the concentrated inwardness of human nature as a means of giving form to the over-varied utterances of the fantastic tendency which had hitherto prevailed by way of presenting the latter in the condition of definite and intelligible manifestations was more particularly evident among the Germanic nations; whose inner war of conscience against the harrowing effect of rigid decrees at last took the form of the great act of protestation.

47. The Romanic nations, remaining in exterior submission to the Catholic yoke, continued to sustain themselves in the same direction in which they had been drifting before the inward and irreconcilable division arose; thus seeking to divert themselves by exteriors—and to do this, as I explained, in the sense of producing an interior effect by outward means. Plastic arts (combined with a kind of poetic art, which, as descriptive, assumes the plastic nature, though with a different mode of utterance) are those which produce this interior diverting effect by outward means; and they also comprise the most attrac-

239  
tive and entertaining arts practised by the nations in question.

48. The cultured Frenchman or Italian\* was disinclined to favour his own native plays of popular **Romanic** character. Their crudely simple and **Tendencies** formless condition was too apt to recall **Described.** the confusion prevailing during the Middle Ages; which was precisely what he most wanted to dismiss from mind as an oppressive and anxious dream. On the contrary, he preferred to have recourse to the historic basis of his language; and, in the first place, to the Roman poets (those literary imitators of the Greeks) in whose writings he sought the models for the drama; which he intended only for the entertainment of the finely cultured class, and in recompense to them for that which the common people still continued to enjoy.

49. Painting and architecture, as the principal arts of the Roman Renaissance, had, by tastefully

---

\* (Original note.) Being by no means engaged in writing a history of the modern drama, but having, in accordance with my object, merely to deal with the two principal tendencies already indicated as occurring in course of its development—tendencies, moreover, which disclose fundamental differences in that development in the clearest possible manner—I have omitted all mention of the Spanish theatre; because of its happening to be the only one in which these tendencies are characteristically confused. Although this renders it exceptionally full of meaning in a general sense, it has the effect of preventing it from offering for our immediate purpose these separate tendencies in a state of direct opposition, and in the same marked way (so far as the question of the modern development of drama is concerned) as we find them in Shakespeare as compared with the French tragedy.

entrancing the eye of these superior folk, grown into such importance in their estimation that the uncouth British stage, which was erected merely with planks and hung round with carpets, could not satisfy them. To their players, as the scene for their representations, they allotted some stately hall in the palaces of princes, and this required little modification in order to render it conformable to the required purpose. Stability of the scene became decided upon as the standard and principal condition underlying the entire drama; and in this respect, the rules of Aristotle appear in entire agreement with the admitted tendency of the taste of the upper class, as shown in the modern origin of the kind of drama which they elected to have set before them.

50. The princely spectator, whose eye had been trained by plastic art until it had become the principal medium of affording him positive pleasure, revolted at having to subject this very sense to a mere fantasy which prevented its exercise; and he was the more subject to this feeling as it was a principle with him—expressly to avoid exciting the hazy shape-giving fantasy of the mediæval period. Whenever the drama necessitated a change of scene, it would have been indispensable to provide for him that each object should be represented in form and colour with absolute fidelity, or otherwise he could not have tolerated that the change should take place.

51. But there was not, in this case, any occasion to stipulate for that which the later fusion of dramatic tendencies rendered possible, because the rules of Aristotle, upon which this factitious kind



of drama was based, had already included unity of the scene as an important condition. Thus, it was precisely what the Briton (as the result of having produced his drama organically from within) had still neglected in the way of exterior feature, which now became the standard for the French drama; and this, as one operating entirely from without, could only attain to life through the medium of mechanics.

52. It is now of consequence to give precise attention to the way in which this exterior unity of scene

**Influences** so far dictated the entire attitude of the  
**of Unity of** French drama that, for the representation  
**Scene.** of action (which was now, practically

excluded from the scene) the mere recitation of speeches became substituted. This naturally involved that the Romance, which was not only brimful of action but formed the elementary foundation of both the mediæval and the newer life, should be totally excluded from the stage, considering that the due representation of its many-sided material would have been simply out of question, in default of opportunity for frequent change of scene. It follows that not only the exterior form of the whole but the entire stamp and character to be given to the action (reacting, as it was obliged to do, upon the object of the action itself) were obliged to be borrowed from those sources which, in respect of form, the French poet had decided to accept as his standard. He was, accordingly, obliged to select actions not requiring as their first condition to be condensed by him into a concise mass fit for dramatic purposes; but those which, having been already sub-

jected to this process of condensation, lay ready to hand.

53. The Greek tragic writers had selected as material for condensation the most artistic blossom of their native legends. The modern **The Racine Tragedy** and dramatist, on the other hand (as guided **Early Opera** by exterior rules taken from these plays) was unable to condense the poetic life-elements of his own time in the degree requisite for bringing them into line with the standard to which he was outwardly subject; for this was only to be effected by adopting Shakespeare's almost contrary method of procedure. Nothing remained for him, therefore, but to imitate and repeat, and hence to disfigure what he found in dramas already presented to him in a finished state.

54. The natural result is that in Racine's tragedy we have recitation upon the stage relating to action going on behind it; motives justifying commotion but detached from the commotion itself by the latter being located outside—in short, the desire to do without the power of doing. Art was, therefore, entirely devoted to the exterior beauty of speech, so that in Italy (whence this new description of art proceeded) it became a foregone conclusion that this would soon merge into that particular species of musical delivery with the detail of which we have already become acquainted, and which formed the peculiar basis of opera.

55. It naturally followed that French tragedy should take a similar course; so that Gluck's mode of expression was intrinsically that necessary to the contents of the kind of tragedy in question. In this

way Opera appears as the precocious blossom of an unripe fruit, grown upon artificial soil. Exterior form, with which Italian and French opera began, is precisely that which the new drama should only attain to by organic development of its own being, or, in other words, by following the course taken by Shakespeare.

Then, and then alone, will the natural fruit of the musical drama be brought to a ripe perfection.

---

#### THE MODERN LITERATURE-DRAMA.

56. Between the two diametric extremes presented by the dramas respectively of Shakespeare and Racine, the modern drama now shortly arose and developed, with its unnatural and bastard form; Germany being the site upon which this fruit found nourishment.

57. Here, in equal strength, Roman Catholicism and German Protestantism maintained themselves side by side; becoming so hotly engaged, **Origin of the Modern Drama.** however, in conflict with one another that uncertainty as to the result rendered it impossible for any natural art-blossom to unfold. That inner impetus by which the Briton was moved to the dramatic representation of history and romance remained with the German protestant as a mere form of inward strife, to the stilling of which he applied an extreme perseverance. We have thus a Luther who could raise himself in art as far as the religious lyric. But we have no Shakespeare.

58. The German of the Roman Catholic South could, however, never succeed in bringing himself into that state of light-hearted forgetfulness of inward strife with which the Romanic nations engaged in plastic art, but adhered to his religious ecstasy with dismal earnestness. During a time when all Europe was devoted to art, Germany remained a meditating barbarian. Only what had elsewhere already become obsolete took refuge in Germany, in order, there, to find opportunity to blossom for a second summer. Inferior English players, whom the producers of Shakespearean plays at home had dismissed, visited Germany for the purpose of exhibiting their grotesque and pantomimic jugglery to the people, but it was not long after—at a time, that is, when already in England on the wane—that the Shakespeare drama itself followed. Then, German actors, seeking refuge from the discipline of their tiresome dramatic schoolmasters, took possession of it—in order to adopt it as their practice.

59. On the other hand, the opera as outcome of the Romanic drama, pressed in from the South. The

**Origin of Opera.** fact of its hailing from so illustrious a source as that of the princely palace sufficed to recommend it to the German princes; so that it was the latter who really introduced opera into Germany, whilst—let there be no mistake—the introduction of the Shakespeare play was the act of the common people. In the opera the scenic deficiencies of the Shakespeare stage were confronted by their precise contrary—the most luxurious and refined equipment possible.

60. The musical drama had become a play to be

*seen*, and hence it was literally a "show," whilst the ordinary show or drama had remained exclusively a play, only to be listened to.\* In this connection it is no longer necessary to inquire into the cause of the scenic extravagance of the opera-class, for so loose a description of drama having been constructed conformably to external conditions only was naturally dependent upon those conditions—as represented by pomp and luxury—for the mere maintenance of its existence.

61. It is, however, of some importance to remark how this spectacular display (consisting of refinements and changes of scenic presentations in unprecedented variety set before the eye) had really sprung from the very tendency in which, originally, the unity of the scene had been adopted as the standard.

62. It was not the poet who had done this by condensing the Romance into the Drama, and who, in doing so, had so far left its over-abundance of material unrestrained that in its favour he had appealed to Fancy, and so enabled himself to change the scene frequently and quickly. It was not the poet who, as it were, in the desire to have this appeal to Fancy confirmed by the senses, had invented all this refined mechanism for the purpose of changing scenes in actual representation. It was not the poet, but simply the longing which had set in in favour of exterior entertainment, and provision for its

---

\* (Original.) "Das musikalische Drama war recht eigentlich ein *Schauspiel* geworden, während des *Schauspiel* ein Hörspiel geblieben war."

variety which had brought this to pass. Had this apparatus been really the poet's invention, we should have been obliged to assume that he also had felt the need of a frequent change of scene, as unavoidably proceeding from the drama's over-abundance of material.

63. But as the poet, as we have seen, constructed organically (in the sense of proceeding from within to exterior details) such an assumption would imply that the historic and romantic over-abundance of material was a necessary condition of the drama. Obviously, only the rigid necessity of such a condition could have carried him so far as to invent an apparatus to correspond with this superabundance, by means of which the superabundance of material was bound to take the form, also, of a varied and distracting superabundance of scenery.

64. The case was, however, precisely the reverse of this. Shakespeare felt himself driven by the necessity of dramatic representation for History and Romance. In the new-born zeal to act up to this requirement, it did not occur to him to realise the necessity for reproduction of the scene, also, in a manner true to nature. Had he felt aware of this additional necessity for the production of a completely convincing representation of dramatic action, he would have sought it by means of applying to the over-abundance of material presented by the romance, a sifting and a compression—considerably more strict and searching than before. And this compression would, unquestionably, have been effected in the very same way in which he had already compressed the amount of space required, the dura-

tion of the performance, and on their account, the amount of material itself.

65. The impossibility of compressing the romance any more closely (which, in this case, Shakespeare certainly would have discovered) could not fail to have made its nature so clear to him that he would have perceived it to be not truly in accord with that of drama. This discovery, however, is one which we ourselves have only made, as we gradually became convinced of the undramatic over-abundance of historic material, at the aspect of its scenic realisation; and it was only the circumstance that scenes used merely to require indication which enabled Shakespeare to dramatise the romance.

66. The necessity for a scene corresponding to the locality for the action was one, however, which time could not allow to remain unfelt. The mediæval stage had necessarily to disappear and to make way for its modern successor. In Germany it was determined by the character of popular histrionic art, the dramatic foundation of which, since the decay of the Passion and Mystery plays, had also been borrowed from history and romance. At the period of the uprise of German histrionic art—or about the middle of the eighteenth century—this foundation lay in the romances relating to ordinary life, which were at that time well suited to the spirit of the people. It was considerably more pliable; and, in particular, far less packed with material than the historical or legendary romance with which Shakespeare had to deal, and a suitable presentment of the local scene could, therefore, be easily equipped,

and with much less expense than, for the Shakespearean dramatisation of the romance, would have been necessary.

67. Such pieces of Shakespeare as were taken up by these players were necessarily subjected to the most narrowing rearrangement in every respect, in order to admit of their being performed at all. I omit, in this place, all mention of the reasons upon which this rearrangement was based, preferring to dwell upon the single question of scenic requirements as being, for the moment, the most important for my purpose.

68. Those actors who first brought Shakespeare over to the German theatre were so sincerely minded, in the treatment of their art, that it did not occur to them to render his pieces playable by either realising the constant changes of scene in them in correspondingly varied changes of their own stage scene; or else (and even for love of the author) entirely renouncing all actual representation of the scene, and simply reverting to the sceneless mediæval stage. Instead of that they adhered to the standpoint of their art which they had first taken up, and so far subordinated the manifold changes of Shakespeare's scene to it, that they omitted altogether those which they considered to be unimportant—those of importance, however, being prepared.

69. The amount of loss accruing to Shakespeare's art-work by this kind of proceeding was first observed from the literary standpoint, and, thereupon, a movement set in, in favour of a restoration of the original form of the pieces—and that this



should be extended to their performance. For this purpose two opposite propositions were made; the first of which, that of Tieck, was never carried out. Entirely appreciating the nature of the Shakespeare drama, Tieck advocated returning to the original Shakespeare stage, with its appeal to the spectator's fancy, in lieu of scenery.

70. This desire was in every way consistent, and was directed to the very spirit of the Shakespeare **Modern** play. But if history proves a half-re-  
**Treatment** storation to have ever been unsuccessful,  
**of the** it no less shows a radical one to have  
**Shake-** been on the contrary as uniformly impos-  
**speare Play** sible. Tieck was in favour of this radical restora-  
tion; and deserved, from that point of view, to be respected, though he possessed no influence. The second proposition was to extend to the representation of the Shakespeare drama the enormous apparatus of the opera stage, in the sense of faithfully producing the frequently changing scenes which had originally been merely *indicated* by him. Upon the English stage the latest manner was to take over the Shakespearean scene literally, by presenting it with the fullest realism. Mechanical marvels were invented for the purpose of securing the rapid changes of scene, which were faithfully carried out in every detail. The marching of troops and battles were also represented with the most surprising accuracy; and the whole proceeding was duly imitated in the more important theatres of Germany.

71. Confronted by such a show the modern poet stood meditating and confused. The Shakespeare drama, considered as literature, had been accus-

tomed to produce upon him the elevating impression of the most entire poetic unity, and as long as it had merely called for the exercise of his imagination, that faculty had always proved equal to the task of extracting from the whole, a picture harmoniously rounded off in every detail. This picture disappeared as if it had been suddenly torn from his gaze, this effect being due to the carrying out of the proposal which was now in due course and again brought forward—the proposal to produce the picture completely before the senses; and thus, to give it actuality.

72. This realistic form of his imaginative picture at once revealed to him an interminable host of actualities and motions, which so confused his eye, that he was entirely unable to reconstruct from it the picture which had previously existed in imagination only.

73. This revelation was productive of two principal influences upon the modern poet; both of them tending to undeceive him as to the **Unsettled Condition of the Modern Poet.** Shakespeare tragedy. He resolved, in the future, on the one hand, to abandon all wish of seeing his dramas produced upon the stage; so as to allow the picture of the imagination (of which the Shakespeare drama had been robbed) to remain undisturbed—in accordance with its intellectual object. This, of course, was equivalent to a resolve to write literary dramas for silent perusal only. Or, on the other hand, he applied himself (with a view to the practical reproduction of his fancy picture upon the stage, and more or less instinctively) to the reflective form of drama; the

modern basis of which we have already had occasion to recognise in dramas of a would-be antique character, constructed after Aristotle's rules of unity.

These results and tendencies both exercise a formative influence in the works of the two most important poets of modern times: Goethe and Schiller. To these, therefore, so far as may appear desirable in the interests of my investigation, I must now devote some thought of a closer description.

---

#### GOETHE, SCHILLER AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.

74. Goethe's career as a dramatic poet began with his dramatisation of a thoroughly Germanic and knightly romance, entitled "Götz von Berlichingen," in which he closely followed the Shakespeare procedure, by so far adapting the long drawn-out scenes of the romance to purposes of the stage as the restriction of the latter in point of size and that of the duration of the performance rendered possible. Goethe had to deal with a stage the full purpose of which was to fulfil all requirements in reproducing the locality of the action, however crudely and defectively this might be done; a circumstance which caused the poet to supplement the work (which had been written rather from the literary than from the scenic or dramatic standpoint) by a revision of it, more appropriate for actual stage representation. Yet the only effect produced by this final form (which was specially given to it on account of the

necessity of meeting stage requirements) is to deprive it of the freshness of the romance without imparting to it the full power of the drama.\*

75. Goethe now proceeded to select material for his dramas from the source of the domestic romance. The characteristic of this latter description of work is—that its fundamental action stands entirely apart from any far-reaching association with historical events or connections. It holds fast to the mere social outcome† of the narration of those incidents which form its determinative surrounding; and within that surrounding (which consists, after all, of but the events already alluded to though in reaction and deprived of all colour) it manages to reach its development. Yet this arises more from peremptory motives foisted upon its action by the same surrounding than from any which might be attributed to an inner conscious-

\* The numerous cuts made by Goethe in rearranging his "Götz von Berlichingen," though resulting in imparting greater unity to the work, did not prevent it from remaining rather a dramatic history than an actual drama. There appears much in course of the piece which has but a slender connection with the fate of the hero, and which, however appropriately it may serve to enable us to realise the circumstances of the period, does not contribute to the condensation of emotional interest which most distinguishes the drama from the mere narrative. On the whole the German nation preferred the warmth of the work in its original form; besides which, the poet was himself conscious of the piece being more or less unsuited to the stage. Thus, in a conversation with Eckermann (July 26, 1826), he says: "What trouble I had with my 'Götz,' and still it does not answer as a stage piece." (Translator's note.)

† "Niederschlag." See also par. 219.

ness or which might be credited with being able to attain a complete and form-giving utterance. The action itself is as poor and restricted as the dispositions which call it forth are without freedom or independent inwardness of feeling. When dramatised, however, it suited the intellectual standpoint of the public, and it was even more particularly favourable to the possibility of scenic representation; for, obviously, out of such miserable action no practical scenic necessities could well arise which the existing resources were not able to meet.

76. We are obliged to regard whatever a mind like that of Goethe produced under such restrictions, **Goethe and** as due to what he deemed a necessary **"Faust."** submission to certain prescriptive limitations in order to render his drama possible; and certainly very slightly to any willingness to defer to the narrow ideas inspiring the action of the domestic romance or to the dispositions of the public who favoured it. But Goethe, by entirely abandoning the actual stage drama, freed himself from these restrictions, and attained to the most unfettered freedom; and in his sketch of "Faust," he merely reserved the advantage of dramatic exposition for the literary poem, intentionally and completely omitting all consideration of the possibility of any stage performance.

77. In this poem Goethe struck for the first time, and with entire consciousness, the fundamental tone of the poetical element peculiar to the present time, viz., the impulse of thought to penetrate reality; to which, however, he was not yet prepared to give full artistic effect in the form of reality upon the stage.

This brings us to the point of separation between the mediæval romance, as narrowed down to the slender proportions of the domestic description, and real dramatic material of the future.

78. We must reserve the task of considering the characteristic feature of this point of separation more in detail. For the moment it is sufficient to note how important is the experience herein involved, that Goethe, upon arrival at this parting of the ways, was unable to produce either a real romance or a real drama, but only a poem, enjoying the advantages of both descriptions—in accordance with an abstract artistic measure.

79. Let us now turn our attention from this poem, the formative impulse of which is traceable like a constantly bubbling source throughout the poet's entire artistic life, in order to follow Goethe's art-production, wherever, with renewed endeavour, he may be found to appear to apply himself again to the scenic drama.

**Goethe  
and Greek-  
tragedy  
form.**

80. With the draughting of "Faust" Goethe had decisively parted company with the dramatised domestic drama, which in "Egmont," he had tried to raise to its greatest height, by extension of its surrounding. He had done this in the sense of proceeding from inner contents to outward feature; and had gone so far as to bring within its scope historical features of widely-branching interest. Any charm which the Drama, as the most perfect species of poetic art may have still retained for him, must have been principally due to the contemplation of it in its most finished artistic form. This form (which by

the Italians and French, in accordance with the measure of their knowledge of the antique, was merely intelligible as an imperative rule to be outwardly observed) appeared to the more refined outlook of German inquirers as an essentially active cause in the expression of Grecian life; and its warmth succeeded in inspiring them when as proceeding from that life it became revealed to them through the medium of its monuments.

81. The German poet realised that the special unity which was so characteristic of Grecian tragedy form must not be applied to the drama by any exterior means, but must proceed from unity of contents, and must therefore receive new life upon its appearance from within. It was impossible to compress our modern life (the contents of which had still only been rendered intelligible in the Romance) into such plastic unity that with any clear dramatic treatment it should have been able either to express itself successfully in the form of the Greek drama, to justify such form, or even to produce it as a necessity.

82. As the poet was in this case still only concerned with absolute artistic formation all that was open to him was—at all events, ostensibly—to return to the French manner; that of compulsorily having recourse to the finished material of the Greek legend, in order to impart to his art-work the form of the Grecian drama.

83. When Goethe, however, took the finished material of "Iphigenia in Tauris" in hand, he went to work in precisely the same way as Beethoven did in his most important symphonic movements; for,

like as Beethoven, on mastering the finished material of absolute melody, in a certain sense, dissolved it, crushing it into fragments, and rejoining its scattered members by an organic revivification, in order to render the organism of music itself capable of bringing forth melody—so did Goethe take the ready-prepared material of the "Iphigenia." He separated its various components, and by means of an organically animating poetic outline, joined them together again in order to render the organism of the drama capable of bringing forth the finished dramatic art-form.

84. But it was only by taking material already prepared beforehand that Goethe could bring this method to a success; which he would have been altogether unable to equal in the case of his having taken material from either modern life or romance. As we shall return to the subject of the reason for this manifestation we need now only allude to the fact that a general review of Goethe's artistic production confirms the poet's having also renounced this mode of approaching the drama, from the moment that his object became the actual representation of life itself and not merely the creation of absolute art-work.

85. This life, with its many divisions and subdivisions and with exterior features subjecting it to unintentional influences from all directions, even Goethe himself could only render amenable to a clear representation by adopting the Romance. Thus, the most beautiful traits of his survey of the modern world could only be imparted by the poet in the form of descriptions; or, in other words, by appeal



to the imagination—and not by means of an immediate dramatic representation.

86. In this way it happened that the particular portion of Goethe's art-work which has attained to the very widest influence became, of necessity, identified with the Romance; with that very Romance which, at the commencement of his poetic career, he had forsaken in favour of Drama; and with the true Shakespearean enthusiasm.

87. Schiller, like Goethe, began (under influence of the Shakespeare play) with the dramatised romance. His inclination for dramatic formations kept him long occupied with the domestic and political romance, but at last he arrived at plain and unvarnished history; proceeding therefrom to construct the drama, independently of any go-between. Here was evidence at once forthcoming of the unpliability of historic material, and its lack of all necessary feature for representation in dramatic form.

88. Shakespeare translated the terse, but frank, chronicle of history into dramatic speech which was full of life. This chronicle indicated with an entire good faith, and step by step, the course of historical incidents, and the acts of the various personages concerned; and, by abstaining from criticism, as well as from all expression of personal opinion, resulted in producing, as it were, a daguerrotype of historical facts. Shakespeare simply undertook the animation of this daguerreotype by converting it into a coloured oil painting; and, in doing so, he had necessarily to deal with these facts by utilising the motives which accounted for them, as extracted from their context,

and by attributing these motives to the various acting characters.

89. In all other respects the historic outline remained entirely as it was, this being a privilege consistent with the prevailing stage conditions, as we have already seen. But, confronted with the modern stage, Schiller soon recognised the impossibility of serving up history for dramatic use with Shakespearean adherence to the chronicle. He realised that without troubling about length or shortness, it was only in the romance that any possibility presented of setting out the chronicle by animated portraiture of the characters engaged; and, finally, that only the special features of the Shakespearean stage had allowed of the romance being compressed into its service as a drama.

90. If, therefore, he now sought for dramatic material in history alone, this proceeded alike from the wish and the endeavour so to control the historical subject from the onset, by distinctly poetic conception of it, as to render it susceptible of presentation in the form of drama—admittedly, one only to be made intelligible in a state of the utmost possible unity. It is precisely in this wish and endeavour that the reason may be discovered of the nothingness of our historical Drama.

91. History is only history in so far as it delivers to us the unvarnished doings of men with the most unconditional observance of truth. It is  
**Schiller**  
**and Shake-** not concerned with men's inward inten-  
**speare** tions, but leaves us to gather these for  
**Compared.** ourselves, from the record of their actions.  
 Should we consider ourselves to have rightly divined

these intentions, and therefore desire to present history, as justified by them, our only means of doing this is by writing history pure and simple, or, as may be done with the utmost artistic warmth attainable, by writing historical Romance; an art-form offering no outward constraint in the direction of disfiguring the simple facts of history with arbitrary sifting or abridgment.

92. We can only suitably and rightly understand the intentions of historical personages, as deduced from their actions, by faithful exposition of the actions in question. Any desire however slightly to alter or disfigure them, either for the purpose of rendering the motives more clear or for the mere sake of the description, must necessarily result in misrepresentation of the intentions also, and therefore amounts to an utter falsification of history. Any poet who attempted to utilise historic material for the dramatic stage and, in doing so, either evaded the precision of the simple chronicle or disposed of the historical facts before him in a manner to suit his own arbitrary and artistically formal views, would find himself unable to produce either history or drama.

93. For the purpose of elucidating what has been said, let us take Shakespeare's dramas and Schiller's "Wallenstein," side by side. One glance will reveal how, in the latter, evasion of historic truth is associated with disfigurement of historic contents; whilst, in the former, with the plain precision of the chronicle, the characteristic historical contents step forth to the light of day, and with the most convincing truth.

94. Schiller was, however, unquestionably a greater historical investigator than Shakespeare, and his purely historical writings fully excuse him for his conception of history in the capacity of dramatic poet. What concerns us here, however, is indisputably to establish the fact that though history might be utilised as dramatic material by Shakespeare (on whose stage appeal was made to the spectator's fancy) it cannot be so utilised by us, on account of our requiring the scene itself to be convincingly represented to the senses.

95. Schiller himself was unable (and in spite of the most express preparation of his historic material)

Schiller to compress it into the dramatic unity and "Wallenstein," which he had steadily in view. All that which primarily gives to history its peculiar life (such as the surrounding, which, through stretching far and wide, yet exerts an active influence upon the central object of interest) Schiller could only regard as indispensable to be described. He was, accordingly, obliged not only to transfer this description to a separate piece, but also to convert the drama itself into two dramas.

96. The meaning of this proceeding is not in the least to be confounded with that of Shakespeare in dividing his historical plays into separate parts, because in the Shakespeare plays the entire lives of personages serving as historical centres of interest are divided according to their most important periods, whilst in "Wallenstein," only one such period—and that not particularly rich in incident, comparatively—is given in separate parts merely for the purpose of adding detailed explanations on

behalf of an historical moment left insufficiently clear.

Shakespeare would upon his stage have given the entire "Thirty Years' War" in three pieces.

This "dramatic poem," as Schiller himself called it, was, however, the most straightforward endeavour to acquire from history, as such, material for the drama.

97. In the continued development of the drama we henceforth see Schiller paying less and less attention to history—on the one hand, merely to apply history itself as the dress of some special motive relating to the poet's intellectual culture, or, on the other, to give to this motive a closer approximation to dramatic form; for this, in the very nature of things, and in particular since Goethe's repeated attempts, had become a special object of artistic speculation.

98. By this deliberate subordination and arbitrary arrangement of material Schiller lapsed more and more into the unavoidable error of representing his subject in a reflective and rhetorical manner. At last he entirely submitted its treatment to the form of Greek tragedy, which he utilised for this purpose as the most purely and artistically appropriate. In his "Bride of Messina" he imitated the Grecian form even more closely than Goethe had done in "Iphigenia"; for Goethe had constructed by reference to this form only so far as plastic unity of action was therein exhibited, whereas Schiller sought to evolve from it the very material of his drama.

Schiller's  
Treatment  
of Greek  
Tragedy  
Form and  
Later  
experiences.

99. In this respect the course adopted by Schiller was one more closely resembling that of the French tragic poets, though differing materially from them by presenting the Grecian form in a degree of perfection beyond what they had been able to attain, and by endeavouring to vivify the spirit of this form, of which they were entirely ignorant, as well as to set the stamp of it upon the material of the drama itself. He thus adopted the "Fate" of Grecian tragedy, or, at least, he adopted it just so far as his comprehension of it enabled him to do so; constructing therefrom a plot the mediæval costume employed in which was intended to present a middle point between the antique and modern conventional ideas.

100. From the purely artistic historical" standpoint nothing was ever so deliberately worked out as this "Bride of Messina," and what Goethe in the marriage of Faust with Helena had but indicated, here artistic speculation alone proposed to realise.

101. The realisation, however, was emphatically a failure; for in it material and form were both equally obscured. In the result the mediæval romance which had been so forcibly rendered produced, on the one hand, no effect; whilst, on the other, the ancient form was not even clearly displayed.

102. Now who is there who cannot gather fundamental instruction from Schiller's fruitless endeavour? Even the poet himself now turned away from this form in despair, seeking, in "William Tell" his last dramatic poem, and by means of the resumption of dramatised romance, to regain at least that prac-

tical freshness which, under the influence of his æsthetic experiments, had sensibly decreased.

103. We therefore see also Schiller's dramatic art-creation hovering undecided between history and romance; as between the one poetic element of modern life on the one hand, and the finished form of Grecian drama on the other. In every phase of his poetic power we see him clinging to the former, whilst his higher artistic formative instincts as constantly impel him in the latter direction.

104. What particularly distinguishes Schiller is, that in him the impulse in the direction of antique **The Lessons** pure art-form assumed, on the whole, the of Schiller's character of an instinctive search for the experiences. Ideal. He was so painfully affected at not being able to fill this form effectively with material taken from the elements of our own life, that at last he even grew disgusted at the utilisation of such elements for dramatic representation altogether.

105. With those elements Goethe's practical turn of mind enabled him to become reconciled by renouncing the finished art-form and devoting himself to extending the development of the only one in which the elements of our modern life can be intelligibly expressed. Schiller never returned to the Romance, and the ideal of his higher artistic views, as appearing to him in the ancient art-form, became to him as the essence of true art. This ideal, however, was visible to him only from the standpoint of the poetic shortcomings of our present life. Thus, failing to distinguish between our life conditions and human life in general, he was finally led to picture art as being something quite separate from

life, and the highest art-fulfilment as being something merely thought of, and only to be approximately attained.

106: In this way Schiller remained as if hovering between heaven and earth, and since his time our entire poetic dramatic art has retained the same condition. The heaven in question is, in point of fact, nothing else than the ancient form of art, whilst the earth is that of our present-day practical romance. The newest style of dramatic poetic art, which considered as an art entirely depends for its existence upon those varied attempts of Schiller and Goethe which have since become elevated to the rank of literary monuments, still continues this undecided motion between the extreme tendencies referred to, and it does so to an even staggering extent.

107. Whenever this newest style of dramatic poetic art engages in the representation of life by the aid of merely literary drama, it sinks back again into the platitude of the domestic romance, by attempting to appear scenically effective and intelligible. Or, in the event of its aiming at the expression of a higher form of life, it finds it necessary to divest itself, by degrees, of all its false dramatic plumage, and finally, to present itself to the mere reader frankly as a six or nine volume novel.\*

---

\* The extreme length of the modern novel is a frequent object of derision, but though the case presented by Wagner may be regarded as extravagant, it is well to allow for the increased circumstantiality of description necessary for literary treatment of heroic subjects if anything like a complete picture of surroundings is to be set up before the mind. (Translator.)



108. In order to group our entire literary art-  
 Phases production for the purposes of rapid  
 of Literary survey, we arrange the various manifesta-  
 Art- tions proceeding from it in the following  
 production. order.

109. The Romance is alone capable of artistically presenting the life element of our time in a completely intelligible form.

110. The dramatised Romance is the result of an endeavour to impart to the material of the romance a fuller effect and more direct representation.

111. The modern stage-piece proceeds from the impossibility of such a beginning—an impossibility recognised by, and falling to, the experience of every succeeding poet. This kind of piece derives its underlying support (which from the first is untrue and is ever afterwards devoid of contents) from the material of the romance, rendered, through over-variety of action, of a disturbing character; and it is, moreover, the kind of piece which in turn affords an underlying support to the modern theatre-*virtuose*.

112. The return to the Romance, with its undisturbed display of material, takes place as soon as the poet, becoming aware of his degradation to mere habits of stage-routine, feels an inclination to turn away from the stage-piece. As something entirely strange, however, he indulges in an actual performance of the real Grecian drama—the perfect form for which he had striven in vain.

113. The literary lyric is by him in turn opposed and derided, complained of and sorrowed over—for its want of conformity to our life-conditions;

which, as far as art is concerned, seems to him a contradiction between form and material; and, as far as life is concerned, as a contradiction between Nature and Mankind.

114. It is remarkable that the present time should present an example of this deep and irreconcilable contradiction so unmistakably before us that further misapprehension with regard to it would seem impossible, even to the dullest vision. Whilst the Romance universally (and particularly with the French, after its latest fantastic colouring-up of history) fastened upon the most bare-faced representations of present-day life, choosing its most vicious stratum and, with entire lack of beauty as an art-work, converting literary artifice into a revolutionary weapon against this base: whilst the Romance, I say, assumed the character of an appeal to the revolutionary force of the populace destined to overthrow these foundations, a clever poet, who, as creative artist, had never shown sufficient talent to make himself master of any kind of material for actual dramatic purposes, influenced an absolute king into giving the order to his theatre-superintendent for the production with antiquarian fidelity of a genuine Greek tragedy; and for which a renowned composer had to provide the necessary music.\*

---

\* The "absolute king" alluded to is Frederick William IV of Prussia; the "clever poet," Ludwig Tieck; and the "renowned composer," Mendelssohn; the "genuine Greek tragedy" in question being the "Antigone" of Sophocles, produced at Potsdam, under the circumstances mentioned, in 1841. Almost immediately upon his accession this king

115. This would-be Sophocles kind of drama proved, as towards our life, to be nothing artistic—ally but a coarse compulsory lie; a lie **Fallacy of the New Departure.** directly caused by the crying artistic necessity of covering up the falsity of our entire activity in art-matters. It proved itself a lie the object of which was, by every kind of artistic subterfuge, to employ falsehood in opposition to fulfilment of the true needs of our day.

116. But there was one definite truth which this tragedy could not avoid revealing to us; and that was—that we possess no drama at all; and that we are not able to possess one: that our literary drama is just as far removed from the real drama as the piano is from the symphonic song of human voices; that, in the modern drama, it is only by the most carefully-calculated application of literary

---

had surrounded himself with celebrities of literature science and art—such as Schelling, Rückert, Tieck, Cornelius and Mendelssohn; but the duties thus accruing seem to have proved more congenial to Tieck than to Mendelssohn, whose participation in the “Antigone” revival was entirely due to the royal command—at least, if we may judge from his alacrity in returning to Leipzig in 1842. Tieck, however, had been given a considerable pension by the same monarch, besides having had a title conferred upon him; so that, apart from preferences, these facts sufficiently account for his remaining at Berlin and Potsdam and continuing to co-operate in various other similar theatrical experiments.

Wagner makes further reference to the present circumstance at the close of Chapter III of this work, besides mentioning it also in the pamphlet entitled a “communication” to his friends—where he describes modern theatres as mere instruments in the hands of critics, or as being completely subject to fashion; instancing the Potsdam performance as a case in point. (Translator.)

mechanics that we can succeed in evolving poetry at all; just as, upon the piano, it is only by the application of the most complicated technique that we can succeed in evolving music at all; which amounts respectively, in the one case, to soulless poetic art; and, in the other, to toneless music.

117. But in any case true music, as the loving woman, can have nothing to do with drama of this kind.

The coquette may draw near to the demure man; with the idea of enticing him by flirtation into her net.

The prude may attach herself to the impotent; and, with him, pursue the road to godliness.

The wanton may accept his gift; and laugh at him to boot.

But—the woman who truly pines for love turns herself away from him unmoved!

---

Should we now desire to investigate what it is which reduces this kind of drama to impotence, it will become necessary to fathom the material from which it derives nourishment. We have already seen that this consisted of the Romance; upon a closer inquiry into the nature of which we shall accordingly now engage.



## CHAPTER II.

### EPITOME.

#### MATERIAL OF THE MODERN LITERATURE DRAMA.

##### *The Greek Legend and Tragedy.*

(118) The poetic intuitive and communicative faculties. (119) The same defined. (120) The proportions of outlying objects revealed in accordance with individuality. (121) The treatment of such objects by means of Fantasy. (122) Fantasy dependent for its exercise upon artistic means. (123) The conditions for realisation of Fantasy's creations. (124) The scale of a common intuition necessary for re-communication of Fantasy's conceptions. (125) The Grecian intuition and necessity for study of the Legend. (126) Traits of the Legend. (127) The connection of its manifestations by aid of Fantasy. (128) Man's spontaneous view of primary cause. (129) Poetic representation of primary cause. (130) The popular intuition with regard to form. (131) This intuition directed to attributing human form to the supernatural. (132) The desire of humanity to recognise itself in Art. (133) The attitude of Art towards the individual. (134) Greek tragedy an artistic compression of the Legend. (135) The mode of this compression described. (136) The force of dramatic conciseness. (137) Great conceptions demand decisiveness of action. (138) Action as proceeding from disposition exhibited by the Grecian tragic poets. (139) The Grecian tragic poet secured unity by adherence to the Legend. (140) Greek tragedy and Greek Legend defined.

*The Christian Legend and Tragedy.*

(141) Romance the opposite of folk-poetry by separating instead of grouping. (142) The modern forms assumed by ancient popular intuitions. (143) Formative power of the Romance derived from combining the two principal Legend cycles. (144) The Greek ideal standard of man irreconcilable with the position of the individual in the modern state. (145) Spontaneous life-impulse at variance with the uniformity of arbitrary law. (146) The Christian redemption as a means of reconciling this variance. (147) Christian view of man as the crowning summit of Nature opposed to the Greek idea. (148) Form for the Christian Legend derived from its view of the individual man. (149) Glorification through Death the inspiring force of the Christian Legend. (150) Its climax. (151) Its general effect. (152) Its influence upon the view of life. (153) Greek and Christian views of Death compared. (154) The Greek view as favourable to the development of individuality. (155) The Christian view unfavourable to dramatic representation. (156) An increasing interest the determining element in Drama. (157) Contrast of the Greek drama with the Passion Play of the Middle Age. (158) The Christian Romance and its appeal to Fantasy.

---

*The German Legend and Knightly Romance.*

(159) The German as opposed to the Christian Legend. (160) Origin of the German Legend similar to that of the Greeks. (161) Development of the German Legend upon lines consistent with its origin. (162) The variety of action presented by the heroic Legend. (163) The religious feeling resulting from the contemplation of Nature as permanent basis of the heroic Legend. (164) Christian invasion of the heroic Legend. (165) Consequent impoverishment of the latter's force. (166) Effect upon the heroic Legend of withdrawing from it its original basis of religious feeling. (167) The intrusion of an excessive fantasy. (168) The "Heldenbuch" as illustration. (169) The endeavour to adopt the Christian view as basis for the Legend. (170) Death as the Christian redeeming point of outcome. (171) This outcome inconsistent with the action presented by the Christian

knightly Romance. (172) Aimless effect upon Feeling thus produced. (173) Further corruption by additions to the original Legend. (174) Complete confusion resulting from commixture of the legends of various peoples. (175) This tendency beyond power of the Christian view of life to control. (176) Final extravagance of the manifestations presented. (177) A love of adventure and discovery engendered thereby. (178) Discoveries fatal to the mediæval Romance. (179) The consequent destruction of error applying to natural manifestations only; those with regard to human life remaining; hence this problem of human life our task to solve.

---

*History and Shakespeare.*

(180) The Christian view of life seeks refuge in Dogma. (181) Christianity as dependent upon dissensions between Individual and State. (182) To maintain such dissension the object of the Church. (183) The Church in opposition to the State described. (184) Dual existence of Church and State as outcome. (185) Coalition results in increase of dissension between State and Individual. (186) The investigation of life problems a result. (187) Effect of the discoveries resulting similar to that of discoveries in the natural world. (188) The abandonment of preconceived notions regarding life manifestations. (189) Shakespeare the consummate master in this inquiry. (190) The means of artistically representing the reality of Life, as presented by the Romance.

---

*Modern Man and the Descriptive Romance.*

(191) The modern man comprehensible only in association with others. (192) His interior dissension caused by social views imposed upon him. (193) Modern social views epitomised. (194) Accumulations of history an obstacle to purely human investigations. (195) Laborious character of the inquiry. (196) Conditions of the inquiry. (197) Procedure in life description the opposite of that of the dramatic poet. (198) The romance writer's procedure described. (199) The action of historical personages as portrayed in romance. (200) The basis of such action dependent upon historical



conditions. (201) The detail of explanation involved. (202) The concentration necessary to clearness. (203) The circumstantiality thus absolutely necessary the opposite of the dramatist's requirement. (204) The two opposite methods described. (205) Various contrasts exhibited by results. (206) Justification of the romance by its necessity. (207) The outcome of the romance. (208) Its period of greatest perfection. (209) Suitability to its purpose of the customary historical survey. (210) The concentration already effected by the chronicler. (211) Inconsistency in historic representations. (212) The exploitation of this feature by romance and stage-writers. (213) True history no material for drama. (214) The method of treating historical personages as instruments in the hands of a higher power. (215) Abandonment of this view. (216) Social nature of man the basis of history. (217) Principal trait of modern development. (218) Essential nature the concern of the philosopher—outward manifestation that of the artist. (219) The surroundings of middle-class life as material for artistic representation. (220) Increased importance of middle-class society. (221) Citizen life affords a dull aspect of history. (222) Its features only a mask. (223) This mask a disguise of the real man. (224) This real man's condition unsuited for artistic presentation. (225) The experience of Goethe and Schiller in illustration. (226) The twofold disguise of the human form by historical dress and State-livery. (227) Practical nature of the romance a result of these discoveries. (228) Disintegrating effect of this change upon the Romance as an art-work.

---

*Politics and Journalism.*

(229) The politician no poet though the present-day poet a politician. (230) Napoleon's estimate of the modern "Fate."

## CHAPTER II.

### MATERIAL OF THE MODERN LITERATURE-DRAMA.

---

#### THE GREEK LEGEND AND TRAGEDY.

118. MAN is a poet in two senses. He is firstly a poet by *intuition* and secondly by *communication*.

119. The intuitive, or natural, poetic gift—is the capacity of resolving the manifestations rendered exteriorly evident to him, through the medium of the senses, into an inner picture; the communicating or artistic gift being that which enables him to reproduce this picture, exteriorly for the purpose of imparting it to others.

**The Vocation of Fantasy in Art.** 120. In the same way that the eye can only perceive outlying objects upon a reduced scale in point of size the human brain (as the eye's point of departure for inward survey, and to the activity of which, as conditioned by the entire inner organism, the eye communicates exterior objects) can only perceive these outlying objects upon the reduced scale presented by human individuality.

121. Upon this reduced scale, however, the

brain's activity possesses the power of taking these exterior manifestations (which are now released from their condition of natural reality) and of forming them into new pictures of the most comprehensive kind; as resulting from the two-fold process of sifting them, and of treating them in combination. It is this faculty of the brain to which we give the name of Fantasy.

122. Fantasy is unconsciously directed to acquiring perception of these manifestations according to their natural scale; and this gives it an incentive to reproduce, exteriorly, the picture of them which has been inwardly formed. It is this desire to compare its picture of them with their reality which causes it to try, as it were, to conform to the latter. This exterior reproduction can, however, only take place by the introduction of artistic means; and the senses, whose original perception of these manifestations was intuitive, require (as a condition for re-perception of them as a fancy-picture) that the man who undertakes to effect this intelligibly should have well measured and applied his own organic powers of expression.

123. This fancy-picture can never become perfectly intelligible in its expression unless it communicates these manifestations to the senses according to the scale upon which the senses originally perceived them. Upon this communication being made, and, at last, brought into correspondence with his desires, the correct scale of the manifestations will only be so far recognised by man as he is able to

**The Greek  
Legend as  
Dramatic  
Material.**

identify it with that in which they are commonly revealed to humanity.

124. No person can communicate intelligibly—except with those to whom the manifestations communicated are revealed upon a scale similar to his own. The scale adopted for the communication, however, is really the condensed picture of the manifestations themselves; being that by means of which they are exhibited to man's perception. Such scale, however, must proceed from a common intuition, for it is only that which is recognisable by this common intuition which admits of re-communication by artistic means; and a man whose intuition differs from that which is general is accordingly unable, artistically, to make himself generally known.

125. It is only according to a slight degree of intuitive perception of the nature of outward manifestations that, from the earliest times till now, the artistic impulse to communicate has been able to attain to the power of a convincing representation; and, up to this very day, the real art-work of the Drama has exclusively sprung from the Grecian intuition, as applied to the world at large. But the material for Greek drama was the Legend; the nature of which is accordingly essential to be studied as the only means of enabling us to understand both Grecian art-work itself in its greatest perfection, and that form of it which appears to us to be so entrancing.

126. In the Legend the poetic faculty common to all people still perceives manifestations only in the

**Effect of Fantasy upon View of Primary Cause.** same way as the eye; and not as, in themselves, they really are. Their immense variety, and the relations between them which man is still unable to perceive, first produce upon him an effect of unrest; and, in order to subdue this feeling, he looks about him for something calculated to link these manifestations together—and which he may be able to regard as their primary cause. But discovery of the real connection is open only to an intelligence conceiving of these manifestations in accordance with their reality.

127. As for the connection which is merely conjured up by the kind of man who is incapable of viewing these manifestations otherwise than in the light of the immediate impression they make upon him—that is simply the effect of Fancy; and the primary cause arrived at in this way simply the offspring of a poetical power of imagination.

128. God and gods are the first creations of the human poetic faculty; and, in these, we find man's conception of natural manifestations to be that they proceed from a primary cause; but his spontaneous notion of the latter is none other than that of his own humanity—upon which, accordingly, his poetic primary cause is exclusively based.

129. Should human impulse, seeking to still the inward unrest due to an immensity of the number of manifestations, proceed to represent this poetic primary cause as plainly as possible (rest being only to be regained through the senses which have caused the disturbance) he must present God not only in the form most suitable to be apprehended by his

purely human intuition, but in that of which the exterior outline is most intelligible.

130. All understanding comes to us from Love; and the natural impulse of Man is towards the being

**Art** of his own species. Thus, in precisely  
**Direction** the same way as the human form is to  
**Caused by** him the most intelligible, so will the  
**the Human** qualities of natural manifestations (of  
**Impulse.** the actuality of which he is still ignorant) be rendered most intelligible to him by being reduced to human shape. The entire intuition of the people in favour of shape shows itself, in the Legend, by conveying the widest association of the most various manifestations to the senses within the smallest possible form; and this form, due in the first place to Fancy, now assumes a more or less human demeanour according to the degree of clearness to be accorded to it.

131. Yet, in spite of this, its content is really both superhuman and supernatural; and is, in point of fact, the same co-operative, collective and comprehensive\* force and faculty which can only be admitted to be human and natural when generally associated with the action of human or natural forces; but which both assume a superhuman and supernatural character, from the moment that they are attributed to the merely imaginary form of some humanly-represented individual.

132. In the Legend, therefore, the people exer-

---

\* Diejenige zusammenwirkende vielmenschliche oder all-natürliche Kraft und Fähigkeit.

cises its Fancy in reducing the greatest range of conceivable realities and actualities to the smallest, plainest and most plastic shape; and, in so doing, it becomes the real Art-creator; for it follows that such shape must necessarily acquire artistic form and contents, if, as is their peculiarity, they really spring from the longing that the representation of manifestations should be thoroughly intelligible; and that they should therefore correspond to the ardent desire of humanity, not merely to include recognition of itself (and of its own peculiar—nay, divinely creative, nature) in the object represented, but to regard that recognition as of first importance.

133. In its very signification Art is nothing else than fulfilment of the desire to recognise one's self in an admired or beloved object; and to find one's self again in manifestations of the outer world, as controlled by their representation. In the object which he represents the artist seems to say :

So, too, art thou; so dost thou feel and think; and so wouldst thou act, wert thou but free from the arbitrary compulsion of exterior impressions of life, and enabled to act according to thy wish.

And so it was in the Legend that the people formed its idea of God; of the hero; and, finally, also of Man.

134. Greek Tragedy is the artistic realisation of the contents and spirit of the Grecian Legend; for, in the same way as, in the Legend, though the compass of manifestations might reach in all directions, they were ultimately compressed into a more and more compact form; this same form, in the Drama, was

again produced; but, this time, in its most compressed and compact condition.

135. The common intention as to the nature of manifestations which, in the Legend, passed from the condition of an intuitive survey of natural objects to one of human morality, here, whilst announcing itself to the receptive power of men generally, makes its appearance in the most definite and intelligible form; as an art-work, originating in fancy and proceeding to reality. When, in Drama, the forms (which in the Legend had always been imaginary) came to be represented by men in person, the action, being now presented in a state of reality, again corresponded to the nature of the Legend—by becoming compressed into a plastic solid.

136. If we admit that a man's disposition can only be convincingly revealed to us by his actions, and that the character of a man must always depend upon perfect agreement between his disposition and his action, then this action, and therefore the disposition which prompts it (entirely in the spirit of the Legend once more) becomes only entirely full of meaning and consistent with comprehensive contents as it displays itself with the utmost conciseness. An action divided into many portions is either extravagant, wandering and unintelligible (which happens in the event of all these portions being rich in contents or otherwise of weighty importance) or else it is paltry, wayward and empty; as in the event of the action comprising mere beginnings and endings must equally happen.

137. The content of an action is the disposition



which underlies it. Should this disposition be one which is great and comprehensive, or one which, in some given direction, makes exhaustive demands upon human nature, in that very fact it lays it down as a condition that the action must be decisive, besides being one and indivisible; for, it is only by such action that a great conception can be brought home to our minds.

**Unity of  
the Tragic  
Poet's  
Art-work.**

138. The contents of the Grecian Legend were naturally of this comprehensive but compact order; and, in the tragedy, their expression proved itself with the utmost certainty to be the one necessary and decisive kind of action required. The problem for the tragic poet was to cause this action in its fullest meaning to proceed from the disposition exhibited by the performers, and to do this in a manner by which it should be completely justified; whilst the solution of that problem was to show, in the clearest manner, the necessity for the action—as proceeding from a truthful representation of the same disposition.

139. The unity of the tragic poet's art-work, in respect of form, was indicated beforehand, however, in the very outline of the Legend; so that he had only to carry it out as a living structure; and, by no means, in favour of any spontaneously imagined structure, to break it up, and piece it together again. All that the tragic poet did was to communicate the nature and contents of the Legend in the most convincing and intelligible manner possible.

140. Thus Greek tragedy is nothing else but the artistic fulfilment of this Legend; just as the Legend,

in its turn, had been but the poetic expression of that intuition regarding life-matters which is common to all.

---

### THE CHRISTIAN LEGEND AND TRAGEDY.

141. Let us now endeavour to explain that intuition regarding life-matters of the modern world which finds its artistic expression in the Romance.

From the moment that the reflective intelligence became diverted from the imaginary form, and started seeking to investigate the reality of all the manifestations which were bound up with it, its first experience was, in those cases where poetic intuition had seen only one complete whole, to encounter a continually increasing variety of individualities. This anatomically scientific proceeding began by following a path precisely the opposite of that which had been taken by folk-poetry. Whenever the latter had unconsciously grouped matters together, the former designedly separated them. Whenever the latter had desired to represent the association of things, the trend of the former was to pursue the utmost acquaintance with each part.

142. All popular intuitions were, one after another, in this way, either cancelled, trampled upon as superstitious, or ridiculed as childish. The intuition of the people with regard to natural objects has now taken the form of physics and chemistry; its religion dissolving into theology and philosophy.

Its commonwealth we find in politics and diplomacy; and its art in science and æsthetics.

But the Legend now appears as the historical chronicle.

143. Yet, even the modern world acquired its formative power from the Legend; for, it was by the bringing together and the mixing of two principal Legend-cycles (which had never been able to blend perfectly or to raise themselves to any condition of plastic unity) that the mediæval Romance arose.

144. The very being who, deductively, represents the Incomprehensible, and to whom the Greek re-  
**The Indi.** ferred all exterior manifestations, thus  
**vidual Man.** constituting him the formal point for concentration of all intuitive views regarding Nature and the world generally—that is to say:

#### MAN,

had, in the Christian Legend, become a stranger to himself. The Greek arrived at his conception of Man by means of comparing him with outward manifestations; and (on returning from wanderings into the far recesses of Nature) he found, in man's outward form and moral ideas, a just standard for his measurements, as well as peace for his mind. This standard of measurement was, however, but imaginary; and one only artistically to be realised. Thus, the attempt to apply it in connection with the State immediately led to a contradiction (between this ideal standard and the reality of actual human caprice) being so far discovered that means to sustain the relations of State and Individual had to be

sought; and in the most open infringement of the ideal standard thus set up.

145. When natural practices became embodied in the form of laws arbitrarily agreed upon, and when the community formed by any one particular race settled down in the form of a political State arbitrarily constituted, the spontaneous life-incentive of man began to rebel alike against Law and State, and to do this with every appearance of egoistical wilfulness.

146. In the disagreement between that which mankind recognised as right and proper (such, for example, as the Law and State as constituted) and that to which his pursuit of individual happiness impelled him (which was freedom) mankind, at last, was bound to appear in the light of a puzzle to itself; and it was this feeling of perplexity which formed the point of departure of the Christian Legend. In this, the individual man stepped forth, longing for reconciliation with himself; and, proceeding to the redemption desired—a redemption which faith enabled him to regard as realised—he could but assume the character of some supernatural\* being, in which both State and Law became cancelled by the mere process of being conceived to be included in his inscrutable will.

---

\* In diesem schritt der, der Aussöhnung mit sich bedürftige, individuelle Mensch, bis zur ersehnten, im Glauben aber verwirklicht gedachten Erlösung in einem ausserweltlichen Wesen vor, in welchem Gesetz und Staat insoweit vernichtet waren, als sie in seinem unerforschlichen Willen mit inbegriffen gedacht wurden.

147. The Christian was obliged totally to disregard Nature; which was precisely what had served the Greek in order to arrive at a clear conception of mankind. From the moment of the Christian recognising Man (who was interiorly in the unsettled condition described, and consequently in need of redemption) as the crowning summit of Nature, nature itself could only bear to him the aspect of being still more inwardly in opposition to itself and deserving of condemnation.

Moreover, science (by merely separating Nature into its various constituent parts without any re-discovery of the real connection between those parts) could operate only in the direction of supporting the view of Nature which the Christian had adopted.

148. The Christian Legend, however, acquired material form by becoming embodied in the individual man who endured martyrdom for the crime of opposition to Law and State; and who, in so doing, both justified the existence of Law and State as exterior necessities (by virtue of his resignation to their decrees) and, at the same time, abolished them in making them secondary to the necessity for inward emancipation of the Individual by redemption through God.

**Death  
and the  
Christian  
Legend.**

149. The inspiring force exercised upon the mind by the Christian Legend lies in its picture of glorification through death. The dim glance, directed to us by a dying one whom we love, expressive of the exaltation of the soul due to the approach of death; that soul, already incapable of recognising any realities, by moving us once again through the

ray of light appearing in its look, exercises upon us an impression of sorrow which completely overpowers our hearts.

150. Together with that look, however, we also trace upon the pallid face and lips the presence of a smile. This, in itself, is but the happy consciousness of the pain of death having been at last overcome: and, by appearing at the very moment of approaching dissolution, it affects us as the expression of a foretaste of heavenly joys only to be obtained at the departure of life from the human body.

151. Our memories continue to picture the departed one, exactly as he appeared to us at the moment of death; and any waywardness or doubt attaching to the manifestations presented by his actual life are prevented, by our thoughts, from intruding upon that picture; for, in it, our mind's eye, in its loving retrospect, only remembers the departed one in the twilight of a painless and peaceful felicity.

152. The moment of death becomes, thus, identified in our minds with that of positive redemption through God; as, in all our thoughts, the dear departed appears to us as separated from the feelings of this life. The joys of the latter now count for us as nothing, in view of the promised greater joys to come; but its sufferings (especially in our longing to join the glorified departed) are now fixed in our minds as, themselves, constituting the very nature of our present existence.

153. This death, and the yearning contemplation

of it, forms the one genuinely containing element in **Greek and Christian Artistic Views of Life.** the kind of art which has resulted from the Christian Legend; and which finds its expression alike in dismay, disgust and flight from the conditions of actual life, as well as in the desire for death itself. Death was viewed by the Greek, not only as a natural necessity, but also as one of moral description; yet, in each respect, this view of death was based only upon its relation to life; for it was the latter which he regarded as the real object of all artistic survey.

154. The very reality and arbitrary necessities of life seemed, to the Greek, to require its being followed by the tragedy of death; and the latter was, therefore, in itself, regarded by him but as the conclusion of a life which (by the utmost development of the individual for the purpose of making his individuality felt) had been entirely fulfilled.

155. The Christian, on the other hand, regarded death itself as the real object; and life as receiving its title to veneration or justification only as a period of preparation for death; and of aspiration for the moment of dissolution to come. Consciously depriving the body of all sensuous enjoyment, and employing all the power of the will to that effect, as well as intentionally putting an end to actual existence; these were the actions which it became the object of Christian Art to reproduce; and which could naturally be merely pictured or described, and never, in any sense, *represented* at all; certainly never, at all events, in the form of drama.

156. The one determining element of the drama is the sharply defined content which it artistically

translates into all the reality of motion; and the latter can only bespeak our sympathy when its interest goes on increasing. Should it, on the contrary, grow less, our sympathy becomes feeble until finally dispersed; with the exception of cases where the interest is purposely held in abeyance, in favour of the expression of some necessary peaceful interlude.

157. In the Greek Drama the motion of the opening proceeded, with continually increasing swiftness, right up to the imposing tempest presented by the catastrophe; whereas, the **Course of Greek and Christian Drama Compared.** Christian Drama, in its true and unadulterated form, was obliged to open with the storm of life; and then but to allow its motion until it fancifully died away. The Passion-Plays of the Middle Ages used to set forth the story of the sufferings of Jesus in the form of various pictures which were carried out in all reality; the most important and most striking of these being that in which Jesus was represented on the cross; during the exhibition of which psalms and hymns were usually sung.

158. It was the Legend, as Christian Romance, which alone succeeded in investing the description of the Christian material with any degree of attraction; because it applied itself only to Fancy, as the one means of treating this material; and, at the same time, avoided all recourse to visible representation. To represent this material by means of outward motion directly appealing to the senses was entirely reserved for music; but, in this task, even music itself could only succeed by means of



resolving the Christian material into its sympathetic moments; into colourings without an outline—so that these colourings, as presented by the flow of harmony, might die out after the same manner as the moribund are wont to quit the realities of existence.

---

#### THE GERMAN LEGEND AND KNIGHTLY ROMANCE.

159. The second legend-cycle—that which stands opposed to the Christian Legend and is of such decisively important influence upon our general survey as well as upon artistic formations of the present day—is formed of the native legends of the newer European peoples; and, before all others, of the Legends of the German peoples.

160. The Legend of these peoples, like that of the Greeks, originated, firstly, in the contemplation of Nature; from which it proceeded to the figuring of gods and heroes. One **Insight into the Legend's development.** such Legend—that relating to Siegfried—enables us to trace its original source with some amount of precision; by which means we derive no little instruction with regard to the nature of the Legend in general. Here, we may note such natural manifestations as those of Night and Day and the rising and setting of the sun being converted, by the instrumentality of Fancy, into acting personages, whose doings cause them to be held in either veneration or dread.

161. In the next stage we have those same gods,

who had firstly been only thought of as men, transformed into actual humanly formed heroes; and, to them, it is not only attributed that they once really lived but, upon that fact, the further claim is based that existing tribes and races are their natural descendants. In this way, the Legend, by setting up its own measuring standard and formative principle as well as by justifying pretensions and inciting men to action, penetrated into the domain of real life; thus becoming not only cultivated as a religious Faith, but also claiming to be a Religion; borne out by actual deed.

162. An inexhaustible supply of deeds and incidents held in honour formed the material of the Myth, which had now assumed the character of an Heroic-Legend. Still, however variously these actions might present themselves in poetry and song, they all appeared to be nothing more than variations of a certain definite type of occurrences; which further investigation tends to follow back to a simple religious conception.

163. It was in this religious conception, originally springing, as it did, from the observation of Nature's manifestations, and being coupled with an unimpeded development of its own peculiar myth, that the most variously coloured statements of the Heroic-Legend found a source of constant nourishment. The outward form of this Legend might be ever so constantly added to by accounts of the experiences of the several German races and stems, yet the poetic form of these added experiences always spontaneously resulted in the same way as

**Christianity  
and  
the German  
Legend.**

that originally adopted in the poetic survey of Nature; the latter being rooted deeply in the same religious feeling, inspired by the aspect of Nature, which had produced the Legend in its primitive state.

164. The power of imparting a poetic shape, thus shown to have been possessed by these peoples, was consequently also a religious force, unconsciously held by them in common: and one which had taken root in their original survey of the nature of things. Upon this root, however, Christendom now laid hands, and the prodigious luxuriance in branches and foliage of this tree of the Germanic peoples being altogether inaccessible to the Christian, with all his proselytizing zeal, he sought, on the other hand, to pull up the root by which it was so firmly implanted in the soil of the people's very existence.

165. That original survey of Nature upon which religions had hitherto been based Christianity now abolished; ousting it in favour of a new creed, and by means of a new way of looking at things—precisely the opposite of the former. It could not attain to a complete uprootal of the old belief; but it succeeded in depriving it, at least, of the full artistic power which, until now, had shown itself in the faculty of luxurious production. The Legend, however, in the immeasurable richness of form hitherto supplied by this faculty, henceforth remained as a bough detached from trunk and root of the parent tree; and, deprived of all natural sustenance, it could no longer yield to the people themselves anything but a miserably unsustaining fruit.

166. The place previously occupied by the bond of union for the most varied forms of the Legend, which had been the result of the people's religious survey, was now, after destruction of this bond, taken by a mere con-  
**Dispersive Effects of Christianity upon the Legend.** fusion of motley forms moving hither and thither without connection or restraint, and with a Fancy no longer creative, but having mere amusement for its object. The Legend, thus deprived of its power of production, broke up into single and individually separate fractions; its unity degenerating into a thousandfold collection of all sorts; whilst the mainspring of its action became an indiscriminate accumulation of actions of various kinds.

167. All these actions were, in themselves, nothing but presentations in individual form of the one great original action; which had been necessary to the very being of the people as its means of utterance. They were, in a certain sense, but personal variations of it; yet, in their turn, they became so split up and defaced as to be rendered capable of having their separated parts combined again, or applied in the most capricious fashion. The object of all this was to nourish the restless desire of a Fancy, which, being inwardly crippled and deprived of exterior formative power, could only now devour what was exterior to it; having lost all faculty for evolving anything of interior nature from itself.

168. We find this shattering and destruction of the German epic, as exhibited to us in the confused figures of the "Heldenbuch," take the form of an enormous accumulation of actions; and that this

increases in volume in the same degree that all trace of real contents in them disappears from view.

169. All true understanding of the primitive and living relations of this Legend had been lost to the people, as the result of their acceptance of Christianity; and, now that the life of that Legend's body, so full of unity, had been transformed by death into the life of a numberless throng, as it were, of verminous fables, a foundation was endeavoured to be applied to it, in the shape of the Christian religious survey, with the apparent view of imparting to the latter a new life. Such views could only (by following the course of their inherent character, and strictly speaking) throw light upon that Legend's death; thus adorning it with a mystic glorification.

170. The Christian view vindicated, in a certain sense, the Legend's death by picturing to itself, in their capricious waywardness, the entire crowd of bulky, gaudy and contradictory actions (which it was impossible to explain or justify to the people by any idea either proper or even intelligible to them); and, as it could not succeed in fixing the reasons given, it finally conducted them towards the Christian death as the redeeming point of outcome.

171. The Christian knightly-romance begins with a mass of life presented by the corpse of the old Heroic-Legend; or, in other words, it begins with a crowd of actions, the true meaning of which escaped the poet as founded upon motives proceeding from a survey of life differing altogether from that of Christianity; and, in doing so, it gives true expression to the life of the Middle Ages.

172. The natural tendency and special task of this knightly spiritual poem was to make these actions demonstrate their own aimlessness and futility, and thus to prove to instinctive Feeling that downfall of the acting personages was a necessity; whether this might happen through frank acceptance of the Christian rules of life in favour of contemplation and inactivity, or through martyrdom as the most active justification of the Christian survey of life.

173. The original material of the heathen Legend had, however, already been so copiously added to **Further in-** that it had assumed an unduly manifold  
**fluence upon** character; this being the result of ad-  
**the Legend** mixture with legendary material gathered  
**of the** from all nations, after treatment in each  
**Christian** case similar to that which the Germanic  
**View of Life.** Legend had suffered in being torn away from its natural root.

174. All nations which confessed Christianity were thus wrested from the ground provided by the view of Life which was natural to them; the poems which had sprung from that view being worked into mere toy-pictures, and treated with the most unbridled fancy. The mutual intercourse on a colossal scale during the Crusades caused East and West to exchange this material, and to increase its multifarious character to an enormous extent. The people had, hitherto, confined their Legends to material relating to the homeland; but, now that the home-sense was lost to them, they sought continual compensation from novelties of a foreign character. Everything strange and outlandish was gulped

down with voracious appetite; and the rage for such fantastic food used up every resource of human powers of imagination, to the end of employing it, lavishly, in the most unheard-of and showy adventures.

175. The Christian view of Life was, at last, unable to control this tendency, which however was nothing but the impulse to escape from realities not understood, in order to seek contentment in an imaginary world; and which it had, therefore, itself entirely brought about.

176. This imaginary world, even with the utmost exercise of Fancy, was obliged to take its original conception exclusively from manifestations presented by that of reality; so that, in the long run, the power of imagination could only proceed as the Legend had done. It therefore took such realities of the actual world as it was capable of understanding; and, by compressing them into pictures in which the nature of totalities was exhibited in the form of an individual character, decking them out as the most prodigious wonders.

177. This tendency of the imaginative power was also exercised, strictly speaking, and in common with that of the Legend, in the direction  
**The Modern Expansion of Life-Survey.** discovering not merely reality—but the reality of a vastly extended world; and its activity in this respect was soon forthcoming. The desire for adventures, capable of realising the pictures which Fancy had created, narrowed itself down, at last, to a desire for enterprises in which (considering that the futility of mere adventure had been already experienced a thousand

times) the object directly set in view—namely, acquaintance with the outer world by enjoyment of the fruit of real experiences—was striven for with a zeal earnestly directed to its special attainment.

178. Bold voyages, engaged in with the express object of discovery, as well as deep scientific investigations founded upon their results, finally revealed the world to us as it is in reality. The perceptions thus acquired served to abolish the mediæval romance; and, henceforth, the description of manifestations in fiction took the place of their description in reality.

179. This reality, however, remained undisturbed and undisfigured by our errors, only so far as the manifestations of *nature* were concerned; these being beyond the reach of our activity. Those errors, however, proceeded to fasten upon the reality of *Human Life*; and with a force by which it was completely deformed. Thus, ever since mankind attained to the essential knowledge of natural manifestations, its aim has been also to conquer this further reality; and, in so doing, to learn not only to know the life of Man according to the necessity of his individual and social nature, but, in the end, also to learn to cast it into form.

The capability of doing this now lies within our reach; as, with knowledge of human Life, we have also acquired a standard wherewith to arrive at full perception of the nature of Man.



## HISTORY AND SHAKESPEARE.

180. Having unconsciously brought about the powerful human impulse which thus tended in an

**The** outward direction, and finding itself un-  
**Position of** able either to nourish or to control it, the  
**Christianity** Christian view of Life met this event by  
**in Respect** retreating into a condition of rigid  
**of Art.** Dogma, as if to save itself from a manifestation  
 the meaning of which it could not grasp and thereby  
 giving unmistakable evidence both of its inherent  
 weakness and of its contradictory nature. Real  
 life and the basis of its manifestations had, at all  
 times, been a matter which the Christian view had  
 failed to grasp; and it had been the less able to  
 subdue the dissension which had taken place between  
 the intuitive impulse of the individual man and the  
 State as upheld by law, on account of its having  
 been precisely therein that its own beginnings and  
 qualities had taken root.

181. If the individual man had become reconciled with the State, and particularly if he had even managed to extract from it an entirely full satisfaction in his pursuit of happiness—then would all necessity for the Christian view of Life have disappeared, and Christianity itself have been practically at an end.

182. As, however, it was firstly from this dissension in human dispositions that the Christian view of Life had arisen, so Christianity had to derive entire sustenance as a world-manifestation from continuance of the quarrel. To keep the dissension

alive was therefore obliged to become the very object of the Church's existence, from the moment that it had grown fully conscious of the sources from which its life was drawn.

183. Unity had been also an ambition of the Christian church, to which all announcements relat-

**The Position of Christianity as towards the State.** ing to the occurrences of Life were to be directed as to Life's central point. The Church was not, however, the *central* but the *end* point of Life; Death being the secret of the true Christian nature. At the opposite end the natural fountain of Life was placed, and of this Death could only become master by its destruction; the power which led this Life in the direction of the Christian Death being no other than that of the State itself. The State was thus the special fountain of the life of the Christian Church, and the latter, in opposing the State, was therefore raging against itself. That which the Church contested (in the zeal of its domineering but sincere mediæval faith) was a remnant of the old heathen disposition, speaking through the medium of individual temporal rulers in their own justification.

184. The Church, accordingly, put pressure upon these rulers, compelling them to seek the justification of their authority in divine confirmation, through the medium of the Church. But, in so doing, it was forcing them to consolidate the State of hard-and-fast absolute character; precisely as if it had deemed a State of this description to be necessary to its own existence. The Christian Church was thus obliged to assist, at last, in fortifying its own opposite—the State; in order, by establishing a dual existence, to

render its own possible and, conscious that it could only exist in a political world, the Church itself became a political power.

185. The Christian view of Life, which, properly speaking, gives no place whatever to the State in its

**The** inner consciousness, nevertheless became, **Position of** when consolidated into the Church, not **both Church** merely the defender of the State, but it **and State as** brought the defiance of the State in com- **towards the** pulsion of the individual to such a degree **Individual.** of oppressive painfulness that, henceforth, the human tendency was directed outwards towards emancipation from both Church and State at the same time; as if by way of finding, also in human life itself, that final realisation of things as they are which proceeds from study of their nature.

186. In the first place, however, the reality of life and even of its manifestations had to be laid bare, in the same way as the manifestations of Nature had been previously laid bare by means of voyages of discovery and scientific investigations. The impulse of humanity, which had hitherto taken an outward direction, now reverted to the reality of social life; doing this, in fact, with all the more enthusiasm for the reason that men had never been able, even with all their flights to extreme parts of the world, to get rid of the coercion imposed by these social conditions, but had universally remained under their subjection.

187. The one thing from which there had been flight (yet from which there could never be any real escape) had, finally, to be recognised as so deeply

seated in everyone's heart and intuitive survey of the nature of human things that to flee before it in an outward direction was impossible. After traversing the endless spaces of Nature, and finding the creations of our Fancy relating to the nature of things at variance with fact, we were impelled, upon our return, to seek in a clear and intelligible survey as applied also to human conditions, the same contradiction of an imaginary and incorrect view of them as had obviously served us for their formation and nourishment; and this, precisely in the same way as our previous erroneous views had caused us to estimate the manifestations of Nature.

188. The first and most important advance towards such perception depended, therefore, upon forming a conception of life-manifestations in accordance with their reality, and to avoid, indeed, at first, even the formation of any judgment; proceeding rather with the endeavour to set these manifestations up before ourselves in such a way as to exhibit the facts concerning them and those with which they were bound up in as clear a manner and in a form as closely adhering to truth as possible. No matter how long mariners might persist in figuring to themselves the objects of their discovery so as to bring these into agreement with the notions they had already formed, they had to submit to being undeceived by the reality which was always at last recognised.

189. This being the case, the investigator into matters concerning human life became more and

more independent of all preconceived opinion, in order thus to be able to trace their foundations with the greater security. To adopt the calmest mode of surveying reality in a condition of nakedness and free from all distortion became, henceforth, the poet's guiding rule. To comprehend and represent humanity itself, as well as all things concerning it, just as they are, and not in accordance with what had previously been imagined of them, is henceforth no more the task of the historian than it is of the artist—actuated to set before himself the reality of Life in the form of a condensed picture; and Shakespeare, who was instigated to the discovery of this art by the form of his drama, was its consummate master.

190. But, as we have seen, it was not in the drama itself, but only by means of the imagery and description proper to the Romance that this reality of Life was to be artistically reproduced—a circumstance confessedly arising from causes respecting which we can only become instructed by consideration of this reality itself.

---

#### MODERN MAN AND THE DESCRIPTIVE ROMANCE.

191. It is only in association with men in general, as constituting his surrounding, that man can rightly be understood. Apart from this, the modern man in particular would be obliged to appear the most incomprehensible of all beings. Between his desire

**The Position of the Individual as towards Society.**

to do things and his ability to accomplish them he had formed for himself such an utter confusion of torturous ideas as to bring him into a state of war against himself, ending by self-mutilation and incorporeal transmutation in Christian death.

192. This restless interior dissension was not so well to be explained by the Christian attempt of attributing it to the nature of the individual man himself as by the errors imposed upon that nature by elementary views of Society—which were devoid of all intelligibility. As the torturous ideas referred to disturbed such views they had necessarily to be referred back to the reality from which they had proceeded, and this the investigator could but identify with the only true state of human Society.

193. This state of Society was one in which established privileges by the thousand were sustained upon gross injustices to be estimated by the million. It was one in which man was separated from his fellow-man by impassible barriers at first only set up in imagination, but to which full effect was afterwards given. Yet, even this state of Society could not be understood by itself, for it had to be explained by the aid of rights which had only become such by being traditionally handed down to us in history, by the mass of fact which made up its entire contents, and, finally, by the spirit of historical events themselves and the dispositions which called them into existence.

194. Such historical fact now accumulated to such an extent, before the view of the investigator

**Search for the Purely Human.** bent upon inquiring into the nature of Man, that it became an enormous mass of duly-recorded incident and action, in comparison with which the over-rich material of the mediæval Romance appeared as abject poverty. The closer this mass was examined, the more intricately it spread forth in interminable subdivisions. Yet, the investigator into the realities of human existence had not only to penetrate it, but to carry his inquiry to its utmost point in order to discover from the oppressive waste before him the one thing which could reward him for so much labour; the human being in his real and undistorted condition, and according to the entire truth of his nature.

195. The single-handed investigator was obliged, considering the boundless abundance of historical reality before him, to set limits to his inquiring zeal. He had in the first place to confine himself to the mere indication of the broader mutual relation of events; detaching therefrom, with a view to the attainment of greater precision, certain moments to which a closer relation with surroundings might be assigned—without which an historical account must ever remain obscure.

196. But this relation (without which the description of an historical action cannot be understood at all, even when it is confined to its narrowest limits) requires the detailed presentation of surroundings. Moreover, unless these surroundings are brought to our notice in the form of lively description we cannot sympathise with them.

197. The sense of the necessity for such descrip-

tion compelled the investigator to make himself a  
**Respective** poet, but one whose method of procedure  
**Methods** was precisely the opposite of that of the  
**of the Inves-** dramatic poet. The latter condenses the  
**igator and** surroundings of the acting person into a  
**Dramatic** representation appreciable at a glance,  
**Poet.** in order that his character's actions (the significance  
 and expression of which he has already condensed  
 into one action of principal importance) should proceed  
 from the essential disposition of the individual as well  
 as that completion should be given to the individuality  
 presented; and that human nature, so far as it commonly  
 shows itself in the given direction, should therein be  
 generally reproduced.

198. On the other hand, the author of the romance has to render the action of the leading historical personage intelligible, as a necessity arising from his exterior surroundings. The character of these surroundings must before everything be brought home to us, or we shall fail to experience any impression of historical truth; as it is in the surroundings that we trace the incentive which decides the individual to act so—and not otherwise.

199. In the historical romance we seek to render the same man intelligible whom, from the purely-human standpoint, we should certainly not be able to understand. When we wish to place before ourselves the action of any historical character, purely and simply as one of genuinely human character, it cannot fail to strike us as extremely arbitrary, inconsistent—and in any case, unnatural; this being because we are unable from our knowledge of pure



human nature to account for the particular disposition by which the action was prompted.

200. The disposition actuating an historical personage only coincides with that of an individual so

**Relative  
Methods  
of the  
Romance-  
Writer and  
Dramatic  
Poet.** far as it has been transmitted to him by a general view of the nature of things common to both. This common view, in turn, though emphatically one not to be counted upon either as purely human or as equally valid at all times and

places, nevertheless finds its only explanation in a relation which is purely historical, continually changing and never uniform at any time.

201. In order to explain this relation, in its turn, together with the changes to which it is subject, we have to follow up its entire chain of historic incident and to show how the many items of its complex whole have combined so to affect one single historic relation as to cause it not only to assume precisely such and such form, but also to present such and such a disposition as to form a view of common acceptance.

202. The individual whose disposition is thus to be expressed in action must have his personal freedom confined within the narrowest possible limits, or neither his disposition nor his action will be intelligible. If this disposition is to be explained at all, it can only be in virtue of becoming justified by surroundings which, in their turn, are made plain to us by actions; the latter being allowed to occupy the room of the artistic representation, more or less in proportion to the clearness with which these sur-

roundings have been set out in all their extent and detail.

203. It happens thus that the author of a romance is obliged almost exclusively to occupy himself with the portrayal of surroundings; and that therefore his intelligibility depends upon his being circumstantial. The very thing which the dramatist, in regard to the clearness of surroundings takes for granted, is that to which the writer of a romance has to employ his fullest powers of description, and the commonly accepted view, upon which the dramatist commences by planting his foot, the romance-writer can only gradually develop and secure in the course of his description.

204. The drama accordingly goes from the inner subject-matter to its exterior incidentals; the romance from exterior surroundings to the inner subject-matter.\* The drama-  
**Detail of Procedure in Drama and Romance.** The dramatist, commencing with a simple surrounding which everyone can understand, rises to a development of individuality ever increasing in richness. The romance-writer, beginning with a complex surrounding which it requires some painstaking to understand, has to betake himself, when already exhausted, to description—and that of a character too paltry in itself to be susceptible of individual representation without aid of the foregoing surroundings.

---

\* "Das Drama geht daher von Innen nach Aussen, der Roman von Aussen nach Innen." A slight amplification was here necessary in order to render the idea clear in translation. (Translator.)

205. In the drama the surrounding is enriched by a pithy individuality, completely developed from its own resource. In the romance the surrounding is employed for the purpose of satisfying the cravings of an individuality which is void. The drama discovers to us the organism of mankind, by presenting the individuality to us as showing the nature of the species. The romance, on the other hand, presents us with the mechanism of history; in accordance with which the species is made to show the nature of the individuality. Thus, it happens that dramatic art-work is organic, whilst that of the romance is mechanical, for the drama gives us men as they are, singly;\* whilst the romance merely describes men in their relation to the State. The former shows us the fullness of human nature, the latter seeking to excuse its poverty by means of the State. In short, the drama is formed from inner necessity, the romance from outward compulsion.

206. The romance, however, was by no means an arbitrary production resulting from the course of our modern civilisation, but one which was necessary, in the sense that it presented a sincere and artistic statement of concerns of life which could alone by its means be represented artistically, and not by those of the drama.

207. The aim of romance was specially directed to the portrayal of things as they are, and it was the very genuineness exhibited in pursuit of this aim

---

\* So ist auch das Kunstschaffen im Drama ein *organisches*, im Roman ein *mechanisches*; denn das Drama giebt uns den *Menschen*, der Roman erklärt uns den Staatsbürger.

which finally led to its sacrifice, for the sake of its actuality, of all claim to be considered an art-work.

208. The greatest perfection of the romance as an art-work was reached when, from the standpoint **The Special** of pure artistic necessity, it adopted the **Procedure** method of forming types which had pre-**in Romance**. vailed in the Legend. In the same way that the mediæval romance had condensed the various manifestations of foreign nations, countries and climates into extraordinary compact figures—the new historical romance sought to represent the most manifold utterances of the spirit of entire historical periods as pronouncements issuing from the nature of one special and historical individual personage.

209. In this matter the customary mode of historical survey could not fail to be of support to the writer of romance. With a view to the ordering of the superfluity of historical fact in such a way as to present it readily to our view, we are usually accustomed to heed only those characters which stand most prominently forward, and to regard them as the embodiment of the spirit of a period.

210. The information given us by the chronicler has for the most part consisted in delivering to us, in the capacity of such personages, the rulers only; as those upon whose will and control historical enterprises and political regulations depended. The dispositions of these rulers being obscure, and their mode of action contradictory (but more especially the fact that they never in reality attained to the object which they had in view) led us firstly to misconceive the spirit of history, to the extent of causing us to feel obliged to explain the arbitrary

character of the action of these rulers by referring it to higher inscrutable influences—to which we attributed the power of regulating and pre-ordering the course and bounds of history itself.

211. Such prominent personages in history appear to us as if they were either bereft of will altogether, or, in their will, self-contradictory instruments in the hands of some superhuman godlike power. The eventual results of history were regarded by us as the motive of the movement which caused them, or as the object towards which a higher intelligence had consciously striven from the first. Those engaged in the exposition or representation of history thought themselves justified in tracing such actions of ruling personages in it as appeared arbitrary to dispositions wherein the underlying consciousness of some guiding world-spirit was reflected. They thus cancelled all idea of spontaneous necessity for the motives of those actions, and then deeming the actions themselves to have been satisfactorily explained, they also proceeded to describe them as completely arbitrary.

212. This method, by means of which historical actions could be changed and distorted by arbitrary combination, was that which alone enabled the romance to discover types, and to rise to a certain eminence as an art-work from which it might once more appear suitable for dramatisation. The most recent period has yielded many such dramas; and the joy of doctoring history\* to suit the dramatic form is, at

---

\* Die Freude am Geschichtemachen.

present, still so great that our expert historical artists in stage legerdemain fondly imagine the secret of history itself to have been brought to light in the interest of the stage-piece manufacturing business.\* They deem themselves the more justified in this proceeding on account of having even rendered it possible to apply to the dramatic installation of the story the completest unity of time and place; having pushed their way into every nook of historical mechanism and having found its heart to be the Prince's antechamber, where Humanity and the State can easily come to perfect agreement, as it were between breakfast and supper-time.

213. That this artistic unity as well as the story to which it is applied however are mere shams, and that what is untrue can never produce other than a lying effect—the historical drama of the present day has clearly enough demonstrated. That true history affords no material for drama we are also now quite well aware; for this historical drama has made it entirely clear to us that, even in the case of the romance, it was only by means of offences against the truth of history that it was enabled to bring a certain eminence within its reach.

214. From this eminence the Romance has now again descended, in order to renounce that purity

---

\* Zum Vortheil der Bühnenstückmacherei. The original expression is here given in order that its quiet humour may not be lost for readers of the German language. (Translator.)

**History and the Social Nature of Man.** as an art-work to which it had aspired, and to devote itself to the faithful representation of historical life. The apparently capricious nature of the actions of principal historical characters was only susceptible of explanation to the honour of humanity by discovery of the ground from which those actions necessarily and spontaneously proceeded. Up till now it had been thought unavoidable to consider this necessity as proceeding *from above*, or, as hovering over these great historic personages, and using them as instruments—in accordance with the dictates of a transcendental wisdom.

215. But, now that people had finally become convinced of the artistic and scientific futility of this view, poets and philosophers began to seek for this enlightening necessity in the foundations of universal history, and, therefore, to regard it as proceeding *from below*.

216. The soil from which history springs consists of the *social nature of man*. The whole movement exhibited in history grows out of the necessity felt by the individual of uniting himself with other beings of his own species, in order that in society with them he may raise his capabilities to their utmost value.

217. The manifestations which appear in history are the utterances of this inner movement which is centred in the social nature of man. The force by which that nature is nourished lies, however, with the individual, whose pursuit of happiness can only be satisfied by appeasing his ardent desire for Love. The whole course of development by which the

modern time is characterised consists in drawing conclusions as to the central point of this nature from its outward manifestations, or in taking the death or completion of the fact as the point from which to go back into the inner life of man's social impetus, out of which the fact really grows and of which it is the finished, mature and perishing fruit.

218. That of which the philosopher forms his conception, according to its essential nature, the **The Modern State and Middle-class Life.** artist represents in its outward manifestation; and the poet having already recognised social manifestations as the soil from which history is produced, proceeded to try if he could not set them before himself in such connection as to enable him to explain them.

219. The usual surrounding of middle-class life\* presenting the combination of social manifestations which was most in evidence, he selected this in order that by description of its condition he might succeed in unravelling for himself the nature of the man who, in spite of his exclusion from all participation in historical manifestations, nevertheless seemed to exemplify the conditions upon which those manifestations depended.† This social life of the middle-class was, however—as I have already said—

\* Als den erkenntlichsten Zusammenhang der Erscheinungen der Gesellschaft erfasste er die gewohnte Umgebung des bürgerlichen Lebens.

† Den Menschen zu erklären, der, von der Theilnahme an den Äusserungen der Geschichte entfernt, ihn doch diese Äusserungen zu bedingen schien.



merely an outcome\* of the downward pressure of historical influences; at all events, as regards its exterior form.

220. With the consolidation of the modern State the new movement imparted to life throughout the world unquestionably begins to proceed from middle-class society, the vital energy of historical manifestations then beginning to dwindle—in precise proportion with the seeking of the citizen class within the State to give effect to their demands. The very want of sympathy with which they inwardly regarded these historical manifestations, and the very indolence and carelessness with which they looked on, revealed to us the pressure of the crushing burden which those manifestations imposed upon them, and towards which their demeanour was one of suppressed ill will.

221. Our middle-class life is by no means to be regarded as a living organism, so far as its formation is influenced from above, through **Middle-class Society from the Art Standpoint.** the reaction upon it of historical utterances. The general aspect of middle-class society gives us but an aspect of history which is blunted, distorted and weakened to the extent of losing all expression; so that, what history expresses in the living motion of the breath of the time to which it relates, is yielded by citizen-life, only in the sluggishness of an extension into space.

222. These features of middle-class life were,

---

\* Niederschlag (see also par. 75).

however, but a mask which still hid the real Man from the glance of the inquirer who was endeavouring to seek him out. Thus, the artist, who sought to portray this society, could not describe the real Man but only the features of his mask; and, therefore, the more accurate his description might be, the more certain was his art-work destined to lose all power of living expression.

223. In raising this mask for the purpose of examining the features of human society in their natural condition, the first thing to meet the eye was necessarily a confusion of ugliness and a lack of form. The Man who, corrupted and maimed as regards his real and healthy nature, had been reared by history, now retained, only when under its cloak, an aspect in any way tolerable to the artist.

224. When once this cloak was taken away from him, we were horrified to behold in him a wrinkled and disgusting form; which only resembled the true Man (as we had mentally conceived him in the fullness of his natural being) to the extent of bearing the painful look of suffering of one who is ill and dying—that very look from which Christianity had drawn its enthusiastic inspiration.

225. Those who longed for Art revolted at the sight; either—like Schiller—to weave dreams of beauty in the realm of thought; or, like Goethe, to veil the form in the mantle of artistic beauty—so far as the latter could be made to fit. Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister" was a mantle of this kind; and it conformed to the bare reality of modern Man to the extent of giving a conception and description of

him as striving for himself to attain to an artistically beautiful form.

226. The human form had hitherto remained disguised for the artistic eye, no less than for the glance of the historical inquirer; in the **Later Phase of the Romance.** one case, by historical dress, and in the other by State-livery; the historical dress affording opportunity for fantasy, and the State-livery for disputation. Both poet and philosopher had before them an enormous selection of disposable forms in which (whether with artistic desire or arbitrary choice) to set their conception of Man; whom they still only knew as in the garment which had been merely laid upon him. This garment had even deceived Philosophy as to the true nature of Man; whilst, in a certain sense, the writer of historical romance was strictly a costume artist.

227. With discovery of the real form of modern society the romance assumed a more practical attitude; as the author could no longer indulge his artistic imagination when there stood before him the naked truth—filling the beholder with anger, sympathy and terror. He had only to portray this reality, without showing any desire to subject it to falsehood. He might only exhibit sympathy; and this called his power of passion into existence. There was still room for his invention when engaged in descriptions of the immorality of our modern society; but the deep dejection to which his own description could not fail to give rise ousted him from that condition of contemplative poetic comfort in which it was ever growing more difficult to deceive himself. He was thus driven to reality

itself; in order, there, to contend for the real and recognised desideratum of Human Society.

228. In its course towards practical reality, the creation of romances divested itself more and more of its artistic vesture. Thus, the unity which it had shown to be possible in its case had to be separated into the practical multiplicity of common occurrences for the sake of producing an intelligible effect. An artistic connecting link was impossible under a condition of things in which everything was striving for dissolution and in which the coercive link\* of the historical State was to be set at naught. Romance-writing became Journalism; its material subdividing into political articles whilst its art became the rhetoric of the tribune and its speech breathed a summons to the people.

---

POLITICS AND JOURNALISM.

229. In this way the art of the poet has become transformed into Politics: no one being able to "Fate" in "poetise" without "politising."† The the Modern politician, however, will never become a World. poet, without ceasing to be a politician; whilst, in a purely political world, not to be a politician is about equivalent to not existing at all. Whoever tries to get away from politics by stealth

---

\* Das zwingende Band.

† Keiner kann dichten, ohne zu politisiren.

deceives himself with regard to his own existence. The poet cannot reappear amongst us until we have politics no more.

230. For all that, politics form the secret of our history; and of the condition of things arising therefrom. This was expressed by Napoleon; when he told Goethe that the place occupied by "Fate," in the ancient world, had, since the time of the Roman Empire, been taken by politics.

Let us well understand this dictum of the Expiator of St. Helena. In it the entire truth is epitomised of that which we have firmly to grasp in order to clear our minds upon the further subjects of the material of drama and the form within which that material is contained.

## CHAPTER III.

### EPITOME.

#### FORM OF THE MODERN LITERARY DRAMA.

---

##### *State and Individual.*

(231) Comparison of the "Fate" of the Greeks with that of modern times. (232) Relation to the individual of the moral opinions of Society. (233) Custom the arbiter of Society. (234) Individual impulse misunderstood by the Greeks. (235) Their social view of crime by the individual. (236) Individual crime as represented in the Greek Legend. (237) Society's incorrect view of the Individual.

---

##### *The Legend of Œdipus as Explanation of the Relations between State and Individual.*

(238) The murder of Laius and marriage of Œdipus with Jocasta. (239) Social view of the special circumstances of this crime. (240) Sexual and family love. (241) Nature's law not violated by Œdipus. (242) The power of social convention. (243) Analogy between the case presented by the crime of Œdipus and that of the Man-riddle of the Sphinx. (244) The final solution devolves upon ourselves. (245) The duel of Eteocles and Polynices. (246) The devotion of Antigone to father and brother. (247) The attitude of the State toward the decreed punishment of Antigone. (248) The agreement as to the rulership of Thebes falling to Eteocles and Polynices alternately. (249) The view of Society as to oath-breaking. (250) The view of Society as to innovation,

change of ruler and property. (251) The view of Society as to patriotism. (252) Custom as the social form of selfishness. (253) The respective shares of its enforcement allotted to Church and State. (254) Corresponding allotment of responsibility. (255) Creon's art in reconciling matters. (256) Estimate of the Thebans' actual morality. (257) The morality of expediency. (258) The condonation of wrongdoing for the sake of peace. (259) The extent of crime thus palliated. (260) Society and morality—a query. (261) The baneful tyranny of Custom. (262) Vindication of the truly human in the Œdipus legend. (263) The political wisdom of Creon. (264) His insult to Humanity. (265) Humanity's place of refuge. (266) The love which is purely human. (267) Force of instinctive human nature. (268) The protest of Humanity through Antigone. (269) Sacrifice of Humanity to the State. (270) Humanity avenged through the death of Hæmon. (271) Fall of the State.

---

*Reflection upon the Revival of "Antigone" at Potsdam.*

(272) Appropriateness of the ancient play to the modern situation. (273) Failure of the ancient work to respond to present-day needs.

---

*The State Denies Free Human Individuality.*

(274) Individual human nature the central point adopted by Sophocles in his Antigone. (275) The Ajax and Philoctetes of Sophocles. (276) The Œdipus legend an epitome of the history of Society. (277) All historical progress tending to fuller assertion of the individual. (278) Characterisation of the State in history. (279) The concrete State as illustrated by Louis XIV. (280) The possession of rulership as personal property. (281) The perfect form of Society. (282) The error of Philosophy in its view of the State. (283) The political State and the vices of Society. (284) The political State the "Destiny" of free individuality. (285) The problem falling to our lot to solve.

## CHAPTER III.

### FORM OF THE MODERN LITERARY DRAMA.

---

#### STATE AND INDIVIDUAL.

231. THE "Fate" of the Greeks is the inner necessity of Nature, in consequence of not understanding which the Greek sought to free himself, by means of the arbitrary political State. "Fate," in our own case, is the arbitrary political State, posing before us, on behalf of the maintenance of Society—an exterior necessity, in consequence of having learned to understand which (as imposing conditions upon our existence) we are now trying to free ourselves, by means of the inner necessity of nature.

232. That necessity which is of Nature is to be found most strongly exemplified in the physical  
**Nature as** vital impulse of the individual; being  
**Compared** also expressed (though less clearly and  
**with** more likely to be capriciously estimated)  
**Custom.** in the *moral opinions of Society*; and it is the latter which either influence or condemn the spontaneous bent of the individual, as a citizen of the State.



233. The vital impulse of the individual is exemplified in a manner which is always new; besides being *directly* acted upon. The being of Society, on the other hand, depends upon Custom; and its opinions are *indirectly* acted upon. The opinions of Society (from the moment of their not including full comprehension of the being of the individual, and of the fact that Society itself proceeds from him) are therefore of impeding and restraining tendency; besides which they become more and more tyrannical in the same degree that the spontaneous impulse of the enlivening and innovating nature of the individual leads him to contend against custom.

234. This impulse of the individual was misunderstood by the Greeks; who, regarding it from **The Natural Impulse in Relation to the Opinions of Society.** the standpoint of moral custom, recognised it as of disturbing influence. Their view took the direction that they attributed this impulse of the acting individual to a combination of circumstances in which they imagined him as being under an influence tending to rob them of their own freedom of acting; the latter being assumed as certain of exercise in accordance with the established moral custom.

235. As the individual, in the estimation of society, had become depraved (as a consequence of the deed which he had committed against the moral custom), but as, upon exhibiting consciousness of the deed, he so far re-entered society that, by his consciousness, he became self-condemned, his act of unconscious transgression assumed the sole appearance of being only explainable as a curse resting

upon him and as unassociated with any personal guilt.

236. This curse is represented in the Greek Legend as punishment by the gods for the guilt attaching to some original crime; and as one fastening upon some special lineage until its downfall. In point of fact, however, it is nothing else than the force of instinct; rendered visible to the senses in the unconscious action of the individual, proceeding from the necessity which is of Nature; as against which, the action of Society appears as one of conscious and arbitrary character, requiring both to be explained and excused.

237. It will only be explained and excused, however, when the opinions of Society come equally to be recognised as instinctive; and its consciousness as reposing upon an incorrect view of the nature of the individual.

Let us render this relation clear from the Greek Legend of Œdipus; which is also, otherwise, of such rich significance.

---

#### THE LEGEND OF ŒDIPUS: AS EXPLANATION OF THE RELATION BETWEEN STATE AND INDIVIDUAL.

238. Œdipus had killed a man; one who had first provoked him by an injury, and at last driven **The Crime** him to self-defence. In this, there was **of Œdipus.** nothing for public opinion to find worthy of condemnation; for cases of the kind were often happening, and were easily explained by the neces-

sity of defence against attack which everyone could understand. Still less, was Œdipus guilty of a crime, however, when (as a reward for good service rendered to the country) he took its widowed Queen to wife.

But it came to light that the person slain was not only the consort of this queen, but he was also the father (and consequently his widowed wife the mother) of Œdipus himself.

239. Childlike reverence of the father, love for him, and zeal in proving this love by caring for and protecting him in his old age were such spontaneous human feelings, and so intuitively upon them had the essential primal view of human affairs been founded which had led to mankind being bound together in Society, that a deed which violated them so painfully could not fail to impress men as inconceivable; and as deserving utter condemnation. These feelings were, moreover, so strong and invincible that, not even reflecting how that father had first endeavoured to compass his son's death was able to subdue them. But, though the death of Laius might be regarded as a punishment for his earlier crime, and thus leave us insensible as to his destruction, this relation between the circumstances had nevertheless no power to reconcile us in any way with what Œdipus had done; for this could, in the end, only resolve itself into a case of parricide.

But, public abhorrence rose to an even greater height at the fact of Œdipus having married his own mother and having had children by her.

240. In family life, as the most natural though

narrowest stratum of society, the principle had spontaneously been formed that, between **Society and the Family**, parents and children, as well as between the brothers and sisters of their offspring, quite a different kind of affection was developed from that which arises from the passionate and violent excitement of sexual love. In the family, the natural attachment between progenitor and offspring becomes one arising from habitual association; and it is only from this habitual association that the natural inclination proceeds which subsists between brother and sister. The first incentive to sexual love meets the youth by something appearing before him to which he is not accustomed; and which advances towards him in a state of completeness, as from the midst of Life itself. The irresistible character of this incentive is such that it draws the member of the family away from the family circle, where this kind of attraction had never been presented to him, and hurries him forth to hold intercourse outside his accustomed associations. Sexual love is the exciting cause\* which penetrates the closely-drawn barrier presented by the family in order to spread itself out into communion with human society upon a wider scale.

The view alike of the nature of family affection and that of sexual love, as set against it, is therefore spontaneous; and one which proceeds from the very nature of things. It rests upon both experience

---

\* Die Aufwieglerin welche die engen Schranken der Familie durchbricht.

and custom; for which reason it exercises upon us the influence of an invincible feeling.

241. Œdipus, who married his mother and had children by her, is a manifestation filling us with abhorrence and disgust, because it irreconcilably violates our *accustomed* relations to our mother, and the opinions to which those relations have given rise. **Nature's Attitude towards Social Morality.** These opinions had grown to be regarded as moral ideas; but, if we are to accept them as possessed of such great strength merely because they had spontaneously proceeded from the feeling of human nature, we proceed to ask:

Was the offence of Œdipus in marrying his mother one committed against nature?

Most certainly not. Had Nature thereby been violated, she would have openly proclaimed it by allowing no children to proceed from this union; yet, it was precisely Nature which proved itself as entirely willing. Jocasta and Œdipus (meeting one another as two beings not habitually associated) fell in love and not until the very instant of their eyes being opened to the fact that they were mother and son did they find their love disturbed.

242. Œdipus and Jocasta were ignorant of their mutual social relation; their action had unconsciously followed the natural instinct of the purely human individual; their union was an enrichment of human society, in that two healthy sons and two noble daughters had sprung therefrom; and, to these now, as well as to their parents, the curse of this Society was to go out and to bear them down in a manner which could never be averted. The

stricken pair stood affected by the same consciousness as that of moral society; and, on realising the crime against morality of which they had unconsciously made themselves guilty, they condemned themselves, committing self-destruction in atonement. In thus acting they proved the force of the social disgust which their crime had caused; a disgust which had already been their own view of such matters, even before the crime was committed; and, thus, they also bore witness to the fact that (inasmuch as the deed had been consummated in spite of the conscience of Society) the instinctive individuality of human nature was possessed of a might, not only greater, but irresistible.

243. How significant is, therefore, the fact that this Cædipus should have been the very man who **Cædipus** and had solved the riddle of the Sphinx! At **the Sphinx**, the moment of declaring the hidden central point in this riddle to be Man himself, he proclaimed alike his own justification and condemnation.\* He first encountered the half-brute body of the Sphinx; and, with it, the individual

---

\* The following recall may be useful to some readers :

The Sphinx, appearing near Thebes, and seating itself on a rock, propounded a riddle to everyone who passed by : putting to death all who failed to solve it. The terror of the Thebans was extreme ; and, in despair, they offered the kingdom, together with the hand of the queen, to the person who should be successful in delivering it from the monster. Cædipus came forward ; the Sphinx asked him : " What being has four feet ; two feet ; and three feet ; only one voice ; but whose feet vary, and when it has most is weakest ? "

man, as subjected to nature. Then, just as the half-brute had cast itself down from its place of desert and rocky seclusion into the yawning depths below, so the clever riddle-solver, in returning to the cities of men, thereby provided his own downfall, as a means by which to unravel the problem of the social and entire man. Moreover, in stabbing out the enlightening eyes which had both flamed anger against a despotic oppressor, and beamed with love for a noble woman (because they had not been able to see that the one was his father and the other his mother) he really cast himself down to join the shattered Sphinx below; whose riddle he was thus obliged, again and henceforth, to consider as being still unanswered.

244. It is *we* who have the first duty of solving that riddle; and to do that strictly by justifying individual instinct out of Society itself, as the latter's perpetually self-renewing life-giving and principal possession.

The first thing, now, is for us to touch upon the fuller particulars of the *Œdipus Legend*; and to gather therefrom the attitude assumed by Society, and the erroneous direction taken by its moral consciousness.

245. The government of Thebes now accrued to

*Œdipus* replied that it was "Man"; whereupon the Sphinx threw itself headlong from the rock, *Œdipus* now became king, and husband of his mother, *Jocasta*.

From this incestuous union sprang *Eteocles*, *Polynices*, *Antigone* and *Ismene*. (Translator's note.)

Creon, the brother of Jocasta, from the quarrels **The Decree** which arose between the sons of Œdipus. **of Creon.** As ruler, he commanded that the dead body of Polynices, one of the sons (who, as well as Eteocles, the other son, had been killed in a duel between the two brothers) should lie unburied and abandoned to the birds of prey; the burial of Eteocles being attended with solemn tokens of respect: and that anyone withstanding this decree should, himself, be buried alive.

246. Antigone, sister to the two brothers, and the companion of her blind father in his misery, deliberately defied the order, buried the body of her proscribed brother, and incurred the punishment already decreed. In this, we see, exemplified, the State. We see in it the State which by indiscernible degrees had gradually emerged from Society, which had been nourished by Society's customary views, and which now posed as its direct representative to the extent of confining itself to the representation of custom in the abstract—the very pith of which consists in fear and dislike of what is unusual.

247. The State, endowed with a power conferred upon it only by Society, now employs that power to turn and rend the Society which gave it; by placing an interdict upon the food which Nature has made necessary to the latter's existence, and which consists of its most spontaneous and most sacred social feeling.

The Legend before us indicates quite clearly how this happened. Let us now consider it more in detail.



What advantage did Creon derive from the issue of such a cruel command?

And what was it which enabled him to assume that such a command would *not*, by incurring general indignation, be set at naught?

248. After the death of their father, Eteocles and Polynices had agreed to divide their inheritance, the rulership of Thebes, by exercising it alternately. Eteocles, who came first into its enjoyment, refused to give it up to his brother when Polynices returned from self-imposed banishment at the time agreed upon in order to enjoy, in his turn, the inheritance for an equal period. By this action, Eteocles made himself an oath-breaker.

249. But did Society, as holding the oath to be sacred, punish him for this?

No! For it supported him in what he proposed to do; though it was founded upon his perjury.

Was it, then, that people had already lost all reverence for the sacred character of an oath?

No! For, on the contrary, they raised their cries of mourning to the gods over the evil of oath-breaking which had fallen upon them; and which, they feared, would be avenged. Still, and notwithstanding the workings of a bad conscience, the Thebans managed to put up with the procedure of Eteocles, because the *object of the oath*, in the treaty between the two brothers, seemed imminently to them more difficult to be borne than the consequences of one act of perjury which, perhaps, it might be possible to set aside by means of gifts and sacrifices to the gods.

250. That to which they could not grant approval was the change of ruler and the continual innovation, for custom had already constituted itself into the real law-giver.

**The struggle of Polynices.** Underlying this partisanship of the citizens in favour of Eteocles, there was also to be traced a practical instinct regarding the nature of property; which anybody willingly enjoyed alone, but which no one was so ready to share with another. Each citizen, who regarded property as the pledge of customary calm, became, by that very fact, accessory to the unbrotherly deed of Eteocles; who, as possessor of property, occupied the most prominent position. All the force of selfish custom was therefore ranged upon the side of Eteocles; whilst, against it, there struggled on with youthful ardour Polynices, who had been betrayed. Filled with the sense of an injury crying for vengeance, he amassed an army of heroic companions imbued with the same feeling, approached the city which protected the oath-breaker and pressed it to expel the man who had robbed the inheritance of his own brother.

251. Although this proceeding was prompted by an entirely justifiable anger, it appeared to the citizens of the city of Thebes as, in its turn, a monstrous crime; for Polynices, in laying siege to his native city, had proved himself unquestionably a very *bad patriot*. The friends of Polynices had come together from all races of men, the purely human interest attaching to his case having brought them to his side. Thus, they were really the representatives of the purely-human Society; or, society in its widest and most natural sense; whilst, against

them, there stood a narrow-minded, cold-hearted, selfish State; which (in the same degree as the opposing force pressed forward) kept insensibly sinking into the condition of one of mere dry bones.

In order to put an end to the prolonged hostilities, **The Separate Constitution of Religion and State.** the two brothers challenged each other to fight the matter out single-handed; and both were left dead upon the ground.

252. The artful Creon now cast his eye over the general relations of these incidents with one another; and, from them, drew a clear idea of the nature of public opinion, the nucleus of which was *custom*; added to the anxiety and repugnance caused by innovation. The moral view of society as an entity (a view so strong as to lead the noble-hearted Œdipus, aghast at his unconscious crime against it, to self-destruction) lost strength in precisely the same degree as the determining force of the purely-human came into collision with Society's strongest interest, this being—custom, in the absolute sense; or, in other words, selfishness as practised by the community. But, by this same moral view holding aloof whenever it came into collision with Society, it became constituted as Religion; and, against this, Society (as representing the practical view) became formed into the State.

253. In Religion, that moral view (which in Society had hitherto been something warm and full of life) became morality; or, the ideal of that which, though wished for, could never be attained.

In the State, on the other hand, the practice was

to take only practical utility into account; and if, **State** in course of this, anything happened to **Morality**, wound the moral conscience, there was always the resource of soothing matters, by devotional exercises which did no harm to the authorities.

254. The great advantage of all this was that, whether in Religion or in the State, somebody or other was provided to whose shoulders one's own sins could be transferred. Thus, for crimes of the State the Prince\* had to suffer, whilst the gods were responsible for faults committed against religious morality. Eteocles had been practically the scape-goat of the State, as then newly conceived. It was the gods who had to bring home to him the results of his perjury;† whilst the State's stability was to pass into the enjoyment of the good Thebans themselves; or, rather they thought so, though, as a matter of fact, it turned out very differently.

---

\* (Original note.) The later Democracy was the open assumption of this office of sin-bearer by the community at large; the latter thereby exhibiting, at all events, enough self-knowledge to appreciate that it formed the real basis of all kingly and arbitrary authority. In democracy, therefore, Religion itself became openly an art; and the State, a ring for egotistic personal displays. In its retreat before the advance of individual impulse, the State became a prey to the arbitrary will of powerful characters. Thus, after Athens had lustily applauded an Alcibiades, and had deified a Demetrius—it settled down comfortably, at last, to lick the spittle of a Nero.

† As well as to visit him with the effect of the curse which Œdipus had given forth in his anger upon finding that eagerness to obtain power had led his sons to compass his death. (Translator's note.)

255. Whoever might now offer to become the scapegoat required, could be sure of a welcome in that capacity, and this turned out to be the artful Creon : he who knew exactly how to keep on good terms with the gods—quite unlike the ardent Polynices, who had created such a commotion at the city gates, all on account of a mere perjury.

256. The radical indulgence of the Thebans (in respect of any serious crimes whatever, providing they did not happen to disturb their particular custom as citizens) was easily perceived by Creon, from the circumstances leading up to the tragic fate which had befallen the Laïds. The Pythian oracle had announced to Laïus, the father, that a son, thereafter to be born to him, would one day be his murderer. It was only in order that he might not give any public offence that this venerable father secretly ordered the newly-born infant to be taken into the recesses of some wood and there killed ; thus showing himself entirely mindful of the Theban citizens' moral feeling.

257. Had those Thebans been allowed actually to see the carrying out of this murderous command, they would only have felt angry at the scandal and at the necessity of a considerable number of extra prayers to the gods. They would by no means have experienced the amount of horror necessary to cause them practically to interpose and thus to prevent the deed, besides punishing the deliberate murderer of his own son. Any such feeling of horror on their part would have been immediately choked by the reflection that the local peace which at some future time would certainly have been

troubled by, at all events, a scapegrace son—now, through this deed, was about to be guaranteed.

258. Creon had noticed that discovery of the inhuman deed of Laius had not produced the slightest genuine indignation against the deed itself, but rather that all people seemed as if they would have been better suited by the murder having actually taken place. In that case it was evident that everything would have been all right; for then there would never have been such a terrible scandal in Thebes as that which held the citizens in a state of serious unrest for many a year.

259. *Peace and good order* were the things worthy of consideration. Whether attained at the price of the basest of crimes against not only human nature but even common morality, at the price, namely, of the intentional and deliberate murder of a child by its own father in pursuit of an unfatherly self-seeking motive—*peace and good order* were thought in any case more worthy to be considered than that most natural human sentiment which tells the father that it is not for *him* to sacrifice his children, but for him to sacrifice himself for them.

260. What had now become of this Society which had adopted its own natural view of morality as a ground principle?

261. It had become precisely the opposite of its own ground principle and now represented both immorality and hypocrisy. Custom was the poison which had undermined it. The bias, in favour of custom and in promotion of a peace absolutely undisturbed had lured it into stopping that fountain

the flow of which would have been able to sustain it in health and freshness. This fountain was none other than the Individual—free and determining himself out of his own being. But in its greatest depth of corruption Society has had morality of the truly human kind brought back to it, and this by the same Individual who, in pursuit of the spontaneous impulse of his nature, had previously infringed its dictates—and seemed, morally, to deny them.

262. This further beautiful vindication of true human nature is also presented, by unmistakable features, in the world-historical legend lying before us.

263. Creon had become ruler, the people recognising in him the rightful successor of Laius and **The Love of Eteocles**: a fact, moreover, which he established before the very eyes of the citizens when he condemned the dead body of the unpatriotic Polynices to the awful disgrace of remaining unburied—one which involved the condemnation of his soul to eternal unrest. The command to this effect was of consummate political wisdom, as it fortified Creon's power in two ways: for, by it, he not only justified Eteocles (whose perjury had protected the citizens from intrusion upon their peace) but he also allowed it to be plainly seen that his will was to secure the maintenance of the State in peace and order by any crime, even though the latter taken by itself might be one against pure human morality.

264. The command, therefore, also simultaneously gave proof of his friendly inclination towards

the State; and, so to speak, he slapped Humanity's face, crying :

“Long live the State!”

265. In this State there was just one solitary mournful heart to be found—one to which humanity had flown for refuge. It was that of a sweet young girl; and, from out its depths, the flower of Love had grown into all-powerful beauty. Antigone knew no politics. She loved.

Did she seek to defend Polynices? Did she try to find reflections, relations, or legal points?—so as to either explain, excuse, or justify his action?

No! She loved him. Did she love him *because* he was her brother? But was not Eteocles also her brother?—and were not Œdipus and Jocasta her parents? Could she, after her frightful life-experiences, think otherwise than with horror of her family ties? Can she be supposed to have gained strength for her love from this frightful tearing asunder of Nature's closest bonds?

No! She loved Polynices, because he was unhappy; and because nothing but love's utmost power could free him from his curse.

266. Now—what kind of love could this be, on her part, which was neither sexual, parental, filial or sisterly? It was Love's most beautiful blossom; for, from out of the wreck of all these loves (which Society had refused to recognise and the State had expressly denied) there grew up—nourished by the inextinguishable seed of all of them—the richest flower of all—the flower of purely human love.

267. The love of Antigone was one of the fullest



consciousness. But, though she knew the nature of **The Vindi-** what she did, she also knew that she was **cation of** obliged to do it, that she had no choice **Antigone.** and that her only course was to act in correspondence with her necessity of loving. She knew that this involved obedience to an instinctive and commanding necessity of self-destruction through sympathy, and, in this consciousness of what was instinctive in her, she exemplifies the perfect human being and personifies love—in its greatest fullness and might.

268. To the pious Thebans she said :

What you did to me was to condemn my father and mother because they loved without knowing what they were doing. Yet, you did not condemn Laius, who really intended to murder his own son; and you also defended Eteocles, who was his own brother's enemy. Now, fill up the cup of your iniquity by condemning me for acting as I do from a human love which is entirely pure.

Behold, now, how the love-curse of Antigone was the undoing of the State.

269. No hand was moved for her as she was led to death. The citizens of the State duly wept and prayed that the gods might avert from them the pain of fellow-suffering with the unhappy one. They led her along, consoling her with assurances that what she had done could not possibly end otherwise; the peace and order of the State unfortunately requiring humanity to be sacrificed to it!

270. But—there in the very spot from which all love had sprung, sprang also its avenger.

**The Despair of Hæmon.** A youth was ardently in love with Antigone; and, confessing this to his father, he besought of that father's love mercy for the condemned, which he was sternly refused. Forcing the grave which had received the living form of his beloved, and finding her dead body, he thrust the sword through his own loving heart.

This was, however, the son of Creon, and therefore the son of the State—as personified by him.

271. At the aspect of the dead body of the son, who, through love, had been driven to curse his father, the king became again a father; for the son's love-sword had cut deeply into his heart, inflicting an inner wound. And thus did the State fall—so that, though dying, it might rise again as Man.

Holy Antigone! On thee I call! Unfold thy banner to the winds, that we may march beneath it—to destroy, but still redeem.

#### REFLECTION UPON THE REVIVAL OF "ANTIGONE" AT POTSDAM

272. How strange it was that when the modern Romance had become Politics, and politics had become a murderous battle-field—but, on "Antigone" the other hand, when the poet, in his *of Sophocles*, ardent desire for some glimpse of a perfect art-form, had succeeded in inducing a ruler to order the production of a Greek tragedy—that the tragedy in question should prove to be no other than our "Antigone." They were looking for some

work which would give the purest possible expression to the art-form; and—sure enough—it turned out to be precisely that of which the contents were of *the purest humanity*—the very undoer of the State.

273. How the childish old fogies were delighted over this “Antigone” in the Court Theatre at Potsdam. They had the roses duly strewn for them from above—those roses which the redeeming angelic host in “Faust” allows to flutter down, as so many love-flames, upon the “thick-and-thin devils all be-tailed and provided with short, straight or long crumpled horns”; but, unfortunately, these roses could not succeed in awakening them to any different sensation from that which Mephistopheles experienced from their sting—not Love.\*

The “eternal-womanly” could not raise them “up”; but, on the other hand, the “eternal old-womanish” completely succeeded in bringing them down.

---

#### THE STATE DENIES FREE HUMAN INDIVIDUALITY.

274. The incomparable element about this Legend is not only its remaining true for all time, but its contents however closely condensed remaining also, and for all time, **Truth and Richness of the Legend** thoroughly inexhaustible. What the poet had to do was merely to interpret it. It

---

\* In order to enter into the spirit of these allusions the reader is advised to consult the second part of “Faust,” near the conclusion, commencing with the torch-scene before the palace. . (Translator.)

was, however, not in every instance that even the Greek tragic poet approached the legend which he had to interpret with full impartiality; and the Legend itself, for the most part, exhibited a greater fairness towards individual nature than did the interpreting poet. The tragic poet in this case, however, was so far imbued with the spirit of the Legend as to adopt individual nature as the firmly fixed central point of his art-work; so that it was from that point that the whole work derived nourishment and refreshment in every direction.

275. Thus, before the soul of the poet, the elementally productive nature of the individuality stood in such undeformed condition, that a Sophoclean Ajax and Philoctetes could issue therefrom. These were heroes whom no regard for the most tactical general opinion could tempt into deserting the self-sacrificing truth and necessity of their nature in order to float about in those shallow waters of politics which Ulysses, knowing so well how the wind blew, was able to navigate at will—and in such a masterly manner.

276. It is, at the present time, no longer necessary for us to do more than truthfully interpret the **The Œdipus** Legend of Œdipus according to its **Legend and** inner nature; and, in course of doing so, **the State.** we acquire a clear picture of mankind's entire history from the beginning of Society to the necessary downfall of the State. In the Legend we are made to feel the necessity of this downfall in advance of the event. To actual history falls the task of carrying it out.

277. Never, since the rise of the political State,

has any step forward in history occurred without tending in some way to the State's downfall—even though the movement may have been prompted by ever so firm an intention of strengthening it. The State, considered in the abstract, has always been in the act of falling; though it would be more correct to say that it has never made an appearance in a state of actuality at all.

278. All that we have had has consisted of states, subject to frequent changes, which seemed to crop up like new variations of some unworkable theme; and these, regarded in the concrete, after establishing themselves by violent means, have still been continually interrupted and contested.\*

279. The abstract State has constituted the fixed idea for benevolent, but erring, philosophers; whilst the concrete State offered plunder to the imperiousness of those intriguing and unscrupulous individuals with the detail of whose exploits the pages of our history are filled. With this concrete State—the embodiment of which Louis XIV rightly proclaimed himself to be†

---

\* Die Staaten in concreto haben in beständigem Wechsel, ein gewaltsames, und dennoch stets unterbrochenes und bestrittenes Bestehen gefunden.

† The saying is so familiar that reference to it may seem superfluous. Yet, it is well to recall the circumstances connected with it as pointing the moral in this case. It was upon the death of Mazarin, under whose influence France had greatly prospered, that Louis XIV suddenly commenced to carry out his absolutist theories; and, as these amounted to the purest despotism, his "L'Etat c'est moi" gained celebrity from the fact that it was universally accepted as perfectly expressing and epitomising the principles upon which he acted. (Translator.)

—we have no intention of dealing further. Its central point, too, has been already revealed to us in the Legend of Œdipus. It is the autocracy of Laius that we have to recognise as the germ of all the crimes committed, for it was the desire of continuing in undiminished possession of that which led Laius to become an unnatural father.

280. In some wonderful way this conversion of the possession of rulership into personal property is commonly regarded as the foundation of all good order, although the whole mass of criminal outrage detailed alike in history and legend are due to it.

But let us concentrate attention upon this abstract State.

281. The philosophers of this State wanted to level and settle all imperfections of actual Society according to a normal plan which they had invented. Their great mistake consisted in clinging fast to the notion that these deficiencies constituted the one given fact with which the "frailty" of human nature was in accordance. But these deficiencies had been caused by the real Man himself—firstly by his spontaneous, and then by his erroneous, views of inequalities; just as the correction resulting from his later experience was sure, of itself, to cause that perfect form of Society to be brought about which should respond to the actual needs of men.

282. Yet, these philosophers never went back to the real Man. That was the great mistake, and it led to the State raising itself to an unnatural eminence from which it proposed to lead that very human nature which it could not comprehend; and

which it knew the less about the more it tried to guide it.

283. The political State lives entirely upon the vices of Society—the virtues of the latter being in-

**Vocation of the Individual in the Modern State.** troduced into the State exclusively as the product of human individuality. The State is prevented (by the vice of Society, which is all that it can see) from

recognising that whatever virtues it possesses have been gained for it by the individuality in question. So placed, the State is the oppressor of Society; and this precisely in the degree that Society turns its vicious side to the individual, and would thus, in the end, dry up its own sources of nourishment—that is, if the necessities of human impulse were not stronger, in their nature, than the arbitrary fancies of politicians. The Greeks, in “Destiny,” as they understood it, failed to realise the nature of this individuality, because by it the moral habit of Society was disturbed; and it was in order to struggle against this Destiny that they armed themselves, by means of the political State.

284. This political State has become *our* Destiny, and it is in the State that free individuality now recognises its present forbidding destiny to lie. The essential element in the State is, however, *arbitrary will*; whereas, that of free individuality is *necessity*.

285. The problem thus brought to our consciousness (and which it forms our future task to solve) is that of taking this individuality, which we have seen to be in the right throughout its struggle with the State during a thousand years, and, from it, to organise

**The Individual's Free Disposition of Self.**

Society.\* Organising Society in this sense, however, means founding it upon free disposition of self by the individual as its eternally-flowing fountain of nourishment. But it amounts to a destruction of the State to take the instinctive element in human nature, to impart full consciousness to it within Society, and then closely to define this consciousness as implying that necessity for free disposition of self by the individual which is felt alike by all.

It amounts to a destruction of the State to do this, for it was only by employing Society in support of its denial of free disposition of self to the individual that the State appeared—and it was from this death of the individual that it managed to exist.

\* Wagner's comment upon these passages may be referred to as showing that he attached great importance to the italicised expressions being accepted in a natural sense, and free from the distorted meanings to which social conventions are apt to lead. (Translator.)





## CHAPTER IV.

### EPITOME.

#### INTELLECT AND FEELING.

*Modern Drama Represents a Conflict between State and Individual.*

(286) The artistic portrayal of the struggle of the Individual. (287) The degenerate character of the modern individuality. (288) The means of gaining conscious individuality. (289) The conditions upon which individuality depends. (290) The State as a surrounding of individuality. (291) Individual a chattel of the modern State. (292) Restricted action of individuality. (293) The State use of religious dogma. (294) Freedom of thought the first gain of individuality. (295) Existence of the individual only as Citizen. (296) Death the only release from State-limits of individuality. (297) Effect of this effacement of individuality upon the poet's task. (298) His data taken at second-hand from political society. (299) The appeal to Understanding instead of to Feeling as exhibited in the didactic poem. (300) The requirement of Feeling to deal with what is actual. (301) The poet's necessity to free himself of logical assistance. (302) False conditions under which the modern dramatic poet has to work. (303) Disadvantage caused by early State-impressions. (304) The popular conception of Man. (305) The poet compelled to appeal to Understanding where Feeling should be supreme. (306) Feeling, a hindrance to the modern poet. (307) Consequent over-resort to articulate language. (308) Greek tragedy founded upon the Lyric. (309) The future return

to Feeling. (310) The reason of the modern playwright's embarrassment at the introduction of music.

---

*Necessity of the Participation of Feeling.*

(311) The new form of Drama. (312) Necessity for abolition of exterior influences. (313) The religious consciousness. (314) Present obscurity of the purely human. (315) True human nature as the all-comprehensive religion. (316) Principal manifestation of the purely human in the individual. (317) Justification of the individual by Society. (318) Imperfection of our present knowledge of human relations. (319) Necessity of excluding from the study all influence proceeding from State enactments. (320) Key to the difficulty afforded by the distinctive situations of Life. (321) Their purely human character. (322) The characteristics of Youth and Age. (323) Application of the experience of age to the inexperience of youth. (324) Parental advice unrestrictive of action. (325) Loss in Society of the creation of motive through love. (326) The contrast between loving guidance and State-enactment. (327) The historical, or general, as compared with the loving, or individual, guide of conduct. (328) Usurpation by Custom of the place which Love should occupy. (329) The true relation of Age to Youth. (330) This relation exemplified in the application of experience. (331) Age the situation of highest poetic capability. (332) The knowledge of self induced by the counsels of Love. (333) Adviser and advised stand relatively as Intellect and Feeling. (334) The definition of artistic judgment. (335) The characterisation of artistic judgment. (336) The practical application of artistic judgment. (337) The attitude of Feeling as towards artistic judgment. (338) The beneficial results.

---

*Greatest Necessity of Feeling in Dramatic Art-work.*

(339) Characterisation of the Drama. (340) The conditions of the dramatic poet's task. (341) Necessity of exclusion of the intellectual combining force. (342) Feeling only intelligible through Feeling. (343) Importance of choice of action. (344) Subjects unsuited to drama and

proper for narration only. (345) The political and historical drama's necessity to point a moral. (346) Truth to actual life emancipates the real drama from such conditions. (347) Impossibility of isolated human action. (348) The weak human relations of slight actions. (349) The strong human relations of lofty actions. (350) The latter require exhibition of this wide relation. (351) The poet's duty defined. (352) Compression, the work of the poetic intellectual faculty. (353) The procedure described. (354) The co-operation of Fantasy. (355) Fantasy, the intermediary between Intellect and Feeling. (356) Characterisation of the picture thus evolved. (357) The intellect's mode of procedure. (358) The picture evolved by the co-operation of Fantasy as constituting the Marvellous.

## CHAPTER IV.

### INTELLECT AND FEELING.

---

#### MODERN DRAMA REPRESENTS A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

286. IN course of this destruction of the State there now occurs for Art, as the exclusive concern of this investigation, the following all-important situation to be considered.

The artistic portrayal of the long struggle of the individual, in order to free himself from the political State or religious Dogma, was the more obliged to fall to the duty of the poet as the contents of political life became more and more consciously made up of the vicissitudes of the warfare; and as the poet, through standing apart from political matters, was obliged in the end to lead a purely meditative existence.\* Let us set aside the religious poet within the State who, even in his capacity as an artist, sacrificed humanity to his idol with inhuman pleasure. We

---

\* Ein geträumtes Leben.

have thus only to deal with the poet who, filled with poignant sympathy for the sufferings of the individual, and as one such individual himself, applied himself to the artistic representation of his battle against the State and against politics.

287. The very individuality, however, thus incited by the poet to give battle to the State was, in the nature of things, not one which was purely human; but one subject to conditions set up by the State itself. It was of one species with the State; and represented the opposite of the extremest pinnacle of the State's pretensions—only so far as this point lay within State limits.

288. Conscious individuality (by which we mean the kind which decides us in any given case to act in a certain way and not otherwise) we can only gain within Society—that being where we first encounter the case we have to settle.

289. The individual, as apart from Society, is entirely unthinkable as an individual in our sense;

because it is through our dealings with other individuals that whatever differs from them and is peculiar to ourselves is first brought to light. Society, having now become the political State, dominated the peculiarities of the individual by its very nature; and, of course, in its capacity as State (as contrasted with free Society) it was enabled to do this far more powerfully and categorically than would have been possible to Society otherwise.

It is not possible for anyone to depict an individual apart from the surrounding upon which his individuality depends. Should this surrounding be

sufficiently natural to allow the individuality free air and space for its development—a surrounding capable, by contact with this individuality, of at once freely and elastically taking new forms in obedience to an inner impulse—it would lend itself to presentation in the very simplest of outlines; for, it is only by means of presentation of the individuality that surroundings first attain their own peculiar characteristics.

290. The State, however, far from being any such elastic pliable surrounding, was a dogmatic, rigid, enchaining and overbearing power, dictating to the individual:

Thus have you to think and act!

291. The State has assumed the very upbringing of the individuality. It makes itself his master from the mother's womb; by decreeing **State Control of Individuality** for him an unequal portion of the means of social independence. It forces its moral code upon him; and, in so doing, robs him of all spontaneity of view. It treats him as its own property, in assigning to him the exact position which he is to take up in relation to his surroundings.

292. The citizen of the State has the State to thank for his individuality; which, however, is nothing but the position which has been assigned to him towards it. That position is one in which the purely human individuality for guidance of his action is cancelled; and in which, at best, it can only be exercised upon what he quite quietly thinks to himself.

293. The State now sought, by the aid of religi-

ous dogma, likewise to sweep out that dangerous recess of the human brain to which the entire individuality had flown. Here, however, it was obliged to stop powerless, as it could only succeed in turning out hypocrites; or, in other words, citizens of the State who act one thing—and think another. But, it was precisely from thinking, that opposition to the State gathered strength in the first place.

294. The first purely human agitation to gain freedom is seen in the defence against religious dogma; and freedom of thought was, at last, under pressure of necessity, granted by the State. But, how does this purely meditative individuality express itself in action?

295. So far as he is confronted by the State the individual can only act as its citizen; or, in other words, as an individual whose mode of action is not in correspondence with his mode of thought.

296. The citizen of the State is unable to step in any direction where that step is not already indicated beforehand; either as a duty or a crime. Thus, the character, either of his duty or offence, is not that which is proper to his individuality. Let him begin whatever he will, he cannot, in the indulgence of his own way of thinking, go beyond the State; to which even his very crime belongs. It is only by death that he can cease to be a citizen of the State; which, consequently, coincides with his ceasing to be a man.

297. The poet, who had now to represent the struggle of individuality against the State, could, in consequence of this, portray the State; but free



individuality he could only indicate as it appeared to him in thought. The State was the actuality, or the showy coloured-up object, which stood in evidence. The individuality, on the other hand, was the mere ideal; or, the formless and colourless object which was out of sight.

298. All traits, outlines and tints which impart to the individuality its firm, decided and recognisable artistic form, the poet was obliged to copy from Society; after it had been first politically set apart, and then consolidated as a State. He could not copy them from the individual himself, who exhibits his own outlines and the tints which characterise his dealings with other individualities.

299. This merely *mentally conceived*, but *unrepresented*, individuality could, therefore, be only **The Artistic** represented to the *mental conception*; **Procedure** not to that *feeling* the grasp of which is **in Regard to** immediate or direct. Our drama was, **Intellect** and **Feeling**, therefore, an appeal to Understanding—not to Feeling. It accordingly took the place of the didactic poem; the material for which, though taken from life, is only developed—so far as is consistent with the object of bringing a given thought home to the mind. But, in order to bring a given thought home to the mind, the poet's procedure must be circumstantial; and it is equally necessary that, when he addresses himself to the immediately appreciative feeling, it should, on the contrary, be *simple*.

300. Feeling grasps only what is actual; or, what is set before the senses in a state of action being

what those senses can perceive; hence, all communication to feeling is restricted to what is complete, and separately existing; or, to just that very thing which is at the present time likely to happen. Feeling cannot understand anything but that which is at peace with itself. Whatever is either at variance with itself, or still failing in point of reality and certainty of announcement, only confuses the feeling: and, by requiring thought, leads to a combining act—the result of which is to dispense with feeling altogether.

301. The poet who specially appeals to Feeling must, by way of announcing himself convincingly, be, as regards thought, so thoroughly at peace with himself as to be independent of all help from the resources of logic; and, thus prepared with full consciousness, be able to communicate directly with the unerring receptivity of the instinctive and pure human feeling.

302. In thus communicating, his procedure must be smooth; besides (as it is in full view) being unconditionally the same, as far as Feeling is concerned, as that with which actual manifestations, such as breeze and blossom, or man and beast, make themselves evident. But the modern dramatic poet, as I have shown, is obliged to proceed in precisely the contrary manner in order to make the communication, through his description, of that within his reach which is both highest and most convincingly intelligible; in other words the purely-human individuality. He has to begin by taking infinite pains to reconstruct this individuality out of the huge

mass of its actual surroundings as they appear in the measure, form and colour allowed them by the State; as well as in history, which is but the State again in petrified condition.\*

303. That which from the first our feeling insensibly grasps is the form and colour of the State.

**Influence of Custom upon Artistic Methods.** From the earliest impressions of our childhood, onwards, we see Man only in the form and character given to him by the State; the individuality with which he is invested by the State appearing to our spontaneous feeling as a real being, so that we cannot conceive him otherwise than by the light of those distinguishing qualities which, in point of fact, are not his at all—but have been merely lent to him by the State.

304. Nowadays, the people at large can form no other idea of a man than in the special dress of his class—that in which, from his youth upwards, he appears physically and bodily before them; and the

---

\* (Original note.) Goethe, in his "Egmont," tried to set before the Feeling this individuality in dungeon-solitude, and in momentary expectation of death, as one of purely human character and at peace with itself; but, though he stripped it of all the troublesome detail of those historical and political conditions upon which throughout the piece it had depended, he was obliged, for the purpose, to have recourse to musical and visionary effects. How significant it is that the idealising Schiller (of all others) could not understand this specially meaningful trait of Goethe's highest artistic truthfulness! And how incorrect it also was on Beethoven's part not to let his music first enter with the wonders of this scene; but to introduce it previously, and right in the middle of the prosy political exposition, where it was entirely out of place.

"people's playwright"\* is perfectly intelligible when he makes no attempt at wresting the State-citizen from an illusion which so holds him in the toils of an unconscious feeling that any attempt, under the same outward and visible manifestation, to reconstruct the real human being before him, would lead to the utmost confusion.†

305. In order to represent the purely human individuality, therefore, the modern poet has not to address the Feeling—but the Understanding; on the same principle that, even by the poet himself, this individuality has been merely thought out. He must pursue this end by a method which includes enormous attention to circumstantial detail. Everything which modern feeling most readily understands must, so to speak, before the very eyes of this feeling, be slowly and carefully divested of its case, form and colour—the object of this being that, during such divestment, and by a systematic calculation, the feeling may be brought round to

\* Das Volk kann . . . den Menschen nicht anders fassen, als in der Standesuniform . . . und dem Volke theilt sich der "Volksschauspieldichter" auch nur verständlich mit, wenn er es nicht einen Augenblick aus dieser staatsbürgerlichen Illusion reisst.

† (Original note.) It would have to be the same with the people as with the two children standing before a painting representing Adam and Eve, and who were unable to say which was the man, and which the woman—because they were not dressed. How it fixes our mode of survey to note that, as a rule, our eye is subject to painful embarrassment at sight of an unclothed human form, which we generally find even disgusting; and that our own body only becomes intelligible to us by meditation!

thinking; because, after all, the individuality which he wishes to present can only be one which is conceived by process of thought.

306. Thus, the poet must turn from Feeling to the understanding. Feeling, for him, is a hindrance; and it is only after having subdued it with the extremest care that he can approach the special aim he has in view—of expounding a thought to the understanding.

307. The understanding is, accordingly, from the first, the particular human faculty with which the modern poet desires to communicate; and our mind, being subject to such conditions as combining, analysing, dividing and separating, can only be addressed through the medium of word-speech—its own medium; and one which is totally isolated from Feeling, besides merely rising to the portrayal and representation of impressions and conceptions.

308. In the case of our State being, in itself, a worthy object of feeling, the poet, in his drama, would be obliged to some extent to change from music to speech. This was approximately what happened in Greek tragedy, though from causes of a contrary nature. Greek tragedy was founded upon the Lyric, stepping forward therefrom in the direction of word-speech after the manner of Society in emerging from the bonds of feeling, which were natural, moral and religious, and becoming the political State.

309. The course to be taken by the drama of the

future will consist of a return from Understanding to Feeling; and its adoption will correspond to the extent of our own advance beyond that individuality which is only mentally conceived to that which is real. The State, however, forms a surrounding devoid of every purely human, sentimental impulse; and one which cannot be represented in terms of feeling. This is the surrounding which the poet is obliged from the very opening of his work, to portray.

310. The whole purpose which he has in view can only be attained through that organ by which mental combinations are communicated to us—an utterly feelingless modern speech; and therefore it is with good reason that the present-day playwright regards it as inappropriate (as well as both confusing and disturbing) when, for any given object, he is required to introduce music; for that object can only be made in any way intelligible by display of thought, appealing to the mind; and not by display of emotion, appealing to the feelings.

---

#### NECESSITY OF THE PARTICIPATION OF FEELING.

311. But now—what form of drama would the destruction of the State in the sense indicated—the healthy organic Society—call forth?

The destruction of the State cannot be reasonably accepted otherwise than as:

*The realisation by its own force of the consciousness possessed by Society of its purely human nature.*

312. This consciousness cannot, in virtue of its nature, be any dogma impressing us from without;

**The True** it cannot rest upon any historical tradition; nor can it be inculcated by the **Human Con-**sciousness. State. All the while any action concerning our lives is required to be performed by us as an exterior duty the object of the action can never be one of religious consciousness; for actions proceeding from religious consciousness come from ourselves, and are performed for the reason that we cannot act otherwise.

313. A religious consciousness however is one which is all-comprehensive, and it cannot be so considered unless it knows and justifies from its own knowledge that the instinctive spontaneous and purely human is that which alone is true or necessary.

314. All the while the purely human floats before us in anything like the murkiness which, under present social conditions is unavoidable—just so long will our view be of such million-fold character as to embarrass us respecting the main question of how man should be.

315. All the while we remain in error as to his true being, and form for ourselves fancy-pictures of the way in which that being should manifest itself—just so long shall we be obliged to engage in the search and struggle after arbitrary forms in which the kind of being we have imagined should be presented. Just so long, however, shall we also have states and religions, until we have but the *one* religion, and *no State*. But, as being obliged to be one which is all-comprehensive, this religion can be

nothing else than the true human nature, as justified by consciousness; every man being necessarily competent both to feel it and instinctively carry it out in practice.

316. This purely human nature, as exhibited in his own person, is most strongly experienced by the individual in the form of the incentive

**Impediments to Individual development.** which he feels to live and love. It is in obedience to this incentive that the single individual presses forward into society;

where, quite unaided from without, and simply by discovering that only in society can satisfaction be found, he acquires that consciousness which, as religious in the all-comprehensive sense, justifies his nature.

317. In the free disposition of self by the individual lies therefore the foundation of Society's future religion; which cannot enter upon its existence until the individual has received the justification at the hands of Society most calculated to help him forward.

318. We are by no means in any position to form even the remotest idea of either the inexhaustibly manifold character of the relations of living individualities to one another, or of the endless fullness of new forms which, by constant changes, always correspond to each peculiarity of those living relations. The reason of this is that, until now, we have only been able to take cognisance of all human relations in the form of such authorisations as have been historically handed down to us; and which were



predestined to be cast in the political and statutory mould.\*

319. The immeasurable richness of these living individual relation affords us however a presenti-

**The** ment of their nature, when we grasp them  
**Survival of** as being both purely human and always  
**all Obstacle** fully and completely present. This im-  
**by Individ-** fully and completely present. This im-  
**uality.** plies however that we have entirely ex-

cluded from them everything which is exterior to man, and not actually present—such as the enactments of State relating to property and historical right; these having thrust themselves between those relations to the destruction of the love therein existing, robbed them of individuality, made them uniform by Law and established them on State-lines.

320. We may however form an idea of these relations in their utmost simplicity by collectively viewing those distinctive situations created by individual human life which exhibit the conditions under which life in general exists, as characteristic distinctions of Society itself; as, for example, youth and age; growth and maturity; enthusiasm and quietude; action and meditation; impulse and consciousness.

321. The distinctive situation created by custom

---

\* Elsewhere Wagner amplifies this by calling attention to the terms of the passport and police-warrant, the privilege and penalty decreed in which relate respectively to obedience or non-obedience to the State. The annotation however having been omitted in the "Collected Writings" may be regarded as having been afterwards thought by him to be of little importance. (Translator.)

(the native simplicity of which we trace in the retention of its moral ideas of social pattern, **Individuality in Youth** in its hardened state of being hostile to **and Age**. the individual, and in its finally becoming immoral and seeking to deny the purely-human altogether) has nevertheless a well-founded claim to be considered instinctively human. If we examine it closer we see that it is only a distinctive situation exemplifying the manifold character of human nature, through the individual, according to his time of life.

322. A man is not the same in youth as in age; for in youth we crave for action, and in age we long for rest. To disturb our rest in age would be just as painful to us as to impede our youthful action. The longing of old age is naturally justified by that gradual decline of the incentive to action—the gain attending which consists of experience.

323. Experience in itself is, however, full of instruction and enjoyment for its possessor. Still, it can never produce any decisive results from the inexperienced who are taught by it unless the latter be either weakly endowed with the craving for action (which is therefore easily overcome), or the points raised by experience are placed before him in the compulsory sense as the guide to an action which it is his duty to carry out. Only by such compulsion can the natural and general human craving for action be weakened; and although, when considering this weakness superficially it seems to us absolute and as having its foundation in human nature, and although we are accordingly induced to seek by it to justify those laws which reawaken to activity, it is nevertheless the result of the above conditions.

324. Human Society formed its first moral conceptions from the family; and, this being so, they naturally extended to respect for old age. In the family, however, this respect was called forth and carried on by love; which was also its underlying condition and motive. The father loved his son before everything; but, though it was from love that his good advice proceeded, it was also from love that he allowed him full freedom to act.

325. In Society, however, this love which could inspire a motive was lost; and lost in precise accordance with the degree in which reverence was transferred from the person to fixed statements and things exterior to humanity; for these, already unreal in themselves, could not present themselves to us in that lively mutual action wherein love is enabled to respond to reverence; or, in other words, divest itself of all fear.

326. The father who had become a god could not continue to love us; the parental advice which had become a law could not continue to allow us freedom of action; and the family which had become a State could not continue to judge us according to the instinct of love's approbation, but according to the status of cold moral enactments.

327. According to its most intelligible perception, the State imposes upon us the teachings of history as the guide for our own conduct. That conduct, however, can only be sincere when we begin with it in the instinctive sense; and so proceed to acquire experience. Experience which has been imparted to

**Love the  
True Main-  
spring of In-  
dividuality.**

**The  
Twofold ap-  
plication of  
Experience.**

us instructively will only prove fruitful after our own instinctive conduct has caused us to make it again for ourselves. The true and reasonable character of the love which old age bears towards youth is thus confirmed by the fact that it does not set up its experiences as a positive standard for youth's action; but, by referring itself to experience, it enriches the present sum of experiences possessed—for the characteristic and convincing element in any experience is nothing but its individual and special quality. In short, it is that by which we know it; and this special quality is due to the acquirement of the experience resulting from the instinctive action of one special individual, in one special case.

328. The destruction of the State is therefore equivalent to the collapse of the obstruction which **Insufficiency of State-imposed Experience.** has been erected by the prejudice arising from the egoistic vanity of experience, and directed against the natural impulse of individual action. This obstacle, nowadays, usurps the place which naturally belongs to love; and is, in its nature, *lovelessness* itself. In other words, it is infatuation with one's own experience; and the will, at last violently enforced, to experience nothing further. It is the egotistical short-sightedness of custom, the inhuman inertia of doing nothing. Through love the father knows that his experiences are still not enough; but, by those of his child which the love for that child enables him to make his own, his store may become endlessly enriched.

329. It is in the faculty of deriving gratification from the accomplishments of others—of taking the detailed circumstances of which those accomplishments are composed, and which love enables him to convert into an object yielding worthy enjoyment and satisfaction for himself—that the beauty of old age's repose consists. That repose, wherever it exists in conformity with natural conditions, far from being an obstacle to the youthful craving for action, is, on the contrary, an incentive to it. It is the granting of free scope to the activity of youth in an element of love which thus becomes a principal life-element of art; in that it surveys its activity and reaches the most perfect artistic participation in its results.

330. The acquired experience of age is enabled to estimate, according to their characteristic detail, the deeds in which youth has unconsciously exhibited its instinctive impulse; and to survey them in their general relations. It is therefore better able to justify them than the youth who is engaged in them; on account of being in a position to explain them to itself and to depict them with consciousness.

331. In the repose of old age we attain, accordingly, to that definite situation of highest poetical capability which it is only within the power of the younger man to make his own if he has arrived at the same condition of repose; or, in other words, at that just feeling towards the various manifestations of Life.

332. The loving counsel of the experienced to the inexperienced, of the peaceful to the passionate,

**Co-operation of Experience with Zeal.** or of the looker-on to the actual worker, yields its richest and most convincing result when the peculiar nature of the instinctive worker is faithfully exhibited to him. He who is infatuated by the unconscious zeal of life will not be brought to a sufficient knowledge of his own nature to enable him to judge, by means of any moral and general admonition. On the contrary, this can only completely succeed by enabling him to recognise himself in a true picture brought before him; for real knowledge of self only accrues upon this recognition—just as consciousness consists in our knowledge of instinct.

333. He who admonishes occupies the place of the intellect, as representing the power of survey resulting from experience; whilst he who is admonished occupies that of feeling, as representing the unconscious incentive to action in virtue of which inexperience proceeds.

334. The intellect can know no more than how to justify feeling; because, as for itself, it merely stands for the repose which follows after feeling's productive agitation. Intellect is only justified when it knows its exercise to be subject to conditions incidental to the productions of Feeling; and when, by becoming justified through feeling, and by being no longer infatuated by the feelings singly but by being moved with a sense of justice towards human feeling in general, it takes the form of artistic judgment.

335. The understanding, taken in this sense of artistic judgment, is to be placed above feeling; in respect of the quality it possesses of judging with

absolute correctness of the activity of the individual feeling in its contact with objects likewise moved in the same way. It is the very highest social power, and one even entering into the scheme\* of Society itself. And it is the power which knows how to recognise each speciality of feeling according to its species; and, by that species, again to trace it back and finally to justify it.

336. Artistic judgment is accordingly also capable of proceeding to utterance through the

**The Relation between Intellect and Feeling in Artistic Work.** medium of feeling, should its object be to communicate itself to one who is imbued by feeling alone; in which case love will provide it with the necessary means.

By the same feeling of love which moves the artistic judgment to communicate itself in the first place, it knows that, to the man of passion who is engaged in spontaneous action, nothing is intelligible but what addresses itself to his feeling; and that, were it to desire to appeal to this man's understanding, it would, by assuming something from him which itself can only acquire in course of its communication, be obliged to remain incomprehensible. Feeling, however, grasps only what is akin to it; just as the bare intellect, as such, can only make its communication to the mind.

337. Feeling remains unmoved by reflections of the understanding: to hold it in sympathy can only be effected by the reality of a manifestation to which it bears some relation. This manifestation must be

---

\* Die höchste soziale, durch die Gesellschaft einzig selbst bedingte Kraft.

some sympathetically effective picture of the instinctive worker's own nature; and sympathetic effect will only be produced by it if it represents some action to him, the justification for which proceeds from the very same feeling as that with which, in both action and justification, he sympathises, as being his own.

338. From this sympathy he learns his own individual nature just as instinctively as he learned how to recognise the nature of his opposites in the objects and opposites which, in the picture, evolved his own feeling and mode of action. The reason for this is—that he is carried away by a lively sympathy with his own picture, as well as spontaneously moved to enter into the feelings and mode of action of his opposites; whom he decides to acknowledge and to treat with fairness, as in real action they no longer stand opposed to his prejudices.

---

#### GREATEST NECESSITY OF FEELING IN DRAMATIC ART-WORK.

339. It is only to the drama, as the most perfect art-work that the broader survey resulting from experience can be applied with complete success, because it is precisely in this **Position of the Drama with Regard to Feeling.** that the object which the poet has in view and in the service of which all human faculties of expression are employed is most completely deprived of its intellectual aspect and addressed to feeling; or, in other words, is artistic-



ally communicated to the *senses*—as the organs of feeling which are capable of forming instantaneous conceptions. The drama, as the most finished art-work, stands apart from every other kind of poetical production in respect of the fact that, in it, statement of the object in view is most fully kept in the background through being visibly and completely represented. In drama the object in view is the intellectual purpose; and, wherever this remains in evidence, the effect is chilling—the aspect of the poet in the act of proposing to do something causing us to feel that he has not yet arrived at being able to do it.

340. The poet's power in this respect is the absorption of his object by the art-work—the transformation of the intellect in it into feeling. It is only by representing the manifestations of life sensibly before our very eyes in the freest exercise of their instinct, and thus justifying life by its necessity, that he can attain his object; this necessity being the only thing which the feeling he addresses can understand.

341. At the presentation of an art-work nothing should remain upon which the intellect can seek to employ its power of combination. Each manifestation in it must be complete in itself in order that our feeling in respect of it may be pacified, for it is in this pacification of the feeling after extreme arousal to sympathy that the very rest is found which leads us to an instinctive understanding of life.

342. In the drama we *must know*, but we have to

**Vocation  
of the  
Emotional  
in Drama.**

learn through the medium of Feeling. The mind will tell us

So it is!

but only when the feeling has told us

So it must be!

Feeling, however, is only rendered intelligible to itself by means of feeling; for it understands no other language than its own. Manifestations therefore which require for their explanation the endless adjustments of intellect must remain to feeling inconceivable and disturbing. For this reason dramatic action can only become clear by its becoming completely reconciled with feeling; and it accordingly falls to the dramatic poet's duty not to invent action, but to render it so completely intelligible by the necessity of the feeling which underlies it, that feeling is enabled entirely to dispense with the assistance of the understanding in perceiving its justification.

343. The poet's attention has therefore to be principally fixed upon the *choice of action*; which must be such as to enable the action to be completely justified both as to character and scope from the feeling by which it is prompted—as this justification alone can ensure attainment of the object which he has in view.

344. An action can, as we have seen, be represented only to the mind, and not to the feeling, in the event of its explanation being derived from historical relations; or from considerations which, in their nature, do not

**Choice**  
**of Dramatic**  
**Subject.**

concern the present period—or, again, when it either takes its justification from the State's point of view, or when it can only be grasped by reference to dogmas which, though impressed outwardly, are not common and inward in character. In such cases the most successful method would be to appeal to the mental and imaginative faculty by means of narration and description; and to avoid, as to Feeling (and its organs of fixed conception—the senses) any representation dispensing with such assistance. The kind of action referred to is not properly to be viewed by these senses, as it contains a mass of relations totally outside all possibility of presenting a general aspect appreciable by them; and are relations which therefore require, for their comprehension, to be given over to the combining power of thought.

345. In a political and historical drama the feature for the poet to make sure of was accordingly the presentation of the object he had in view simply as such; and therefore in a **Contrast of the Intellectual and Emotional.** perfectly bare condition. His whole drama lost clearness and expression if the object of it did not finally make a visible appearance in the shape of some human moral lesson taken from the awful desert-like expanse of incidental motives for action, as they occur merely in course of description.

It was but natural, during the performance of such a piece, to ask oneself:

“What is the poet driving at?”

346. Action which, on the other hand, is justified through Feeling has nothing to do with any special *moral*; because all its moral lies simply in its justi-

fication by being spontaneously felt. It constitutes in itself an end to be attained, in respect of being destined for justification by the feeling which it awakens. This kind of action is therefore restricted to such as proceeds from relations which are thoroughly true to life and which are therefore most easily grasped by Feeling—which, by lying nearest to human sensations are therefore of the simplest, besides necessarily appertaining to a humanly social community which in its nature is at one with itself and neither influenced by any unreal conceptions nor by any explaining causes which have no present relation to it—which belongs entirely to itself, as distinct from the society of any former period.

347. There is no human action, however, standing completely isolated, for it always depends upon **Varieties of Action.** a general relation to the actions of other men, as well as upon the individual feelings of the person who performs it.

348. This general relation is at its weakest in the case of slight and insignificant actions; which require explanation—less by strength of necessary feeling than by waywardness of mood.

349. The more lofty and determinate an action is, however, the more the impossibility appears of explaining it otherwise than by the strength of a necessary feeling; and the more decisively and extensively is it also connected with the actions of others. An action which is great (in the sense of portraying human nature as it shows itself in one particular direction, and of doing this in the most evident and exhaustive manner possible) proceeds

only from the collision of various and powerful opposing elements.

350. In order to be able to judge of these opposing elements, and to form a correct idea of the actions proceeding from them from the individual feelings of those who perform them a great action must, however, be so exhibited that a wide range of its relations are brought into view; for it is only by means of such range that it can be rightly understood. The duty of the poet which is both first in order and most proper to him may therefore be stated thus:

**Mode of  
Presenting  
Action  
Artistically.**

351. That he should, from the first, keep the wide range just alluded to in view. That he should thoroughly estimate its bearings and that he should investigate each detail of the relations presented; taking each according to its importance and its degree of relation to the principal action. Then, he must make the degree of his own comprehension of them correspond with their degree of comprehensibility in the form of a work of art; which he will do by compressing the wider circle of relations towards their middle-point, and by thus producing an obviously intelligible periphery of the hero.

352. This compression is a work proper to the poetic intellectual faculty; and this faculty is both central point and acme of the man's entire being. From that point the man classifies himself as either one who forms conceptions or who communicates them.

353. A manifestation being first grasped by an outwardly-directed and spontaneous feeling, the

**Further** imaginative faculty is next set to work  
**Stage in the** as the first stage of mental activity; and,  
**Presenta-** in the same way, the understanding  
**tion of**  
**Action.** (which is really nothing else than the  
 imagination made to correspond with the manifesta-  
 tions' real conditions) has necessarily again to ap-  
 proach feeling in communicating what it has now  
 learned to recognise.

354. But though the understanding pictures  
 manifestations as they really are the pictures which  
 it forms are mere products of thought. In order to  
 communicate such mental pictures of reality to the  
 feeling, the understanding is obliged to resort to a  
 picturing similar to that by which it received its own  
 impression from Feeling in the first place; and this  
 latter picture is the work of Fantasy.

355. It is only through Fantasy that Intellect  
 can deal with Feeling; for the intellect only grasps  
 full reality of a manifestation when it breaks up  
 the picture received from Fancy into its smallest con-  
 stituent parts.

356. Then, on desiring to reconstitute these parts  
 into a state of natural relation, it has to form for  
 itself another picture; which is no longer one of  
 exact character, but one which is only restricted by  
 the measure of exactitude necessary to awaken man's  
 recognition.

357. Thus it is that the enormous variety of rela-  
 tions to other matters possessed by even the simplest

**Action's** action both astonishes and confuses the  
**Compression** intellect; the inclination of which is to  
**into the** submit the action to the anatomical micro-  
**Marvellous.** scope. The intellect's only means of com-

prehending action is by setting aside this microscope and by having recourse to that sole picture of which his human eye can properly conceive. Comprehension therefore is only rendered possible in the end by spontaneous feeling, after the latter has been justified by the understanding.

358. This special picturing of manifestations in which they can alone be grasped by Feeling (intellect being obliged to reconstitute it after the model of the picture received originally from Feeling through the medium of Fancy, without which it would not be able to make itself intelligible to Feeling)—this special picturing, when regarded in connection with the object of the poet, who is also obliged to take the manifestations of life and to compress their infinite variety into a compact form for easy survey, is precisely what constitutes

#### THE MARVELLOUS.

## CHAPTER V.

### EPITOME.

#### MATERIAL OF THE DRAMATIC ART-WORK.

---

##### *The Marvellous.*

(359) The miracle in Religion as distinct from the marvellous in poetry. (360) Denial of the understanding. (361) Faith not a concern of the poet. (362) The tyranny of dogma. (363) Dogmatic and poetic wonder as opposites. (364) Scale and manner of poetical compression. (365) The procedure of poetical compression. (366) The conditions for giving meaning to climax of action. (367) The dovetailing of motives. (368) Difference between dramatic action and that of ordinary life. (369) Difference between abridgment and condensation. (370) Conditions for rendering condensation of actual life intelligible. (371) The poet's use of the marvellous. (372) The procedure described. (373) Truth to nature of the result of the poet's work.

---

##### *The Relation of Man to Nature.*

(374) Imaginative faculty first excited by appearance of Nature's manifestations. (375) Progress of the imaginative faculty. (376) The recognition of Nature as a living organism. (377) The poet's standard of measurement of the manifestations which he wishes to communicate. (378) The essential accord with Nature of the poet's standard. (379) The poet's necessary equipment. (380) The intellect's attitude towards Nature. (381) Nature as controlling the



human mood. (382) The effect of Nature upon Man in everyday life. (383) The effect of Nature upon Man's loftier mood. (384) The superior conception of Nature formed by Feeling. (385) The failure of Intellect to rise to equal height. (386) The love of Man to Nature.

---

*The New-found Legend of Pure Expression.*

(387) The new Legend described. (388) The dramatic representation of the new Legend. (389) Compression dependent upon wide survey of mutual relations. (390) The strengthening of motives and situations. (391) "What is strengthening of the motive?" (392) Strengthening not an accumulation of motive. (393) The merging of several motives into one. (394) The procedure described. (395) Concentration of interest upon the central character. (396) The poet's necessary qualification to this end. (397) The effect upon the poet himself. (398) The crowning act of the poet's activity. (399) The sufficiency of articulate speech up to this point. (400) Intellectual treatment as involving no obligation actually to produce. (401) Difference between description and realistic presentation. (402) Insufficiency of articulate speech and introduction of the tonal language.

## CHAPTER V.

### MATERIAL OF THE DRAMATIC ART-WORK.

---

#### THE MARVELLOUS.

359. THE element of the Marvellous in poetical work is distinct from the same feature as represented by the miracle in religious **The Super-** dogma;\* for, whereas the latter suspends **human** the operation of natural laws, the former **in Religion.** rather renders them intelligible to Feeling. The Jewish-Christian miracle destroyed the mutual relation of natural manifestations in order to represent the divine will as being entirely above Nature. The miracle presented absolutely no condensation of any broader relation for the purpose of ensuring its comprehension by Feeling; its application being entirely to purposes connected with itself. By the people it was demanded as proof of the possession of super-human power from one who gave himself out to be God, and in whom they would not believe until

---

\* The term "marvellous" is of course not usual with us in connection with the Christian miracle, but it is the only one of sufficient pliability to cover the various applications of the German word "Wunder" in this chapter. (Translator.)

he had proved himself before their bodily eyes to be the lord of Nature; which, to them, meant—a being capable of upsetting the natural order of things at will. This wonder, accordingly, was required from one who was not, in himself, or in respect of his natural actions, considered to be true; but with regard to whom the proposition was not to believe unless he performed something incredible and passing comprehension.

360. *Fundamental denial by the understanding* was therefore something necessarily assumed, alike by the clamourers for signs and wonders and their actual worker; in return for which *absolute faith* was the pledge required by the latter and granted by the former.

361. Faith, however, is a question which the intellect of the poet completely disregards, as it is **Artistic and** entirely with comprehension by Feeling **Dogmatic** that he is concerned in regard to the im- **Wonder.** pression due to be produced by his communication. His desire is to represent a wide connection of natural manifestations within a picture capable of being readily understood; and, to this end, he is obliged to bring those manifestations into accordance with his picture in such a way as to induce acceptance by the spontaneous feeling without effort, and certainly without being first called upon to explain it.

362. On the other hand, the characteristic of dogmatic wonder is that it brings the understanding under its domineering sway by meeting the instinctive desire for explanation with admitted impossibility to grant it; as well as by afterwards endeavour-

ing to base its action upon the very servility thus caused.

363. Dogmatic wonder, therefore, is just as emphatically unsuited to art as poetic wonder is the highest and most necessary production of the artistic powers of survey and representation.

364. If we imagine the poet's mode of working in the act of giving form to the marvellous, we see, in the first place, that, in order to give a **Compression** clear survey of the wide mutual relation **as compared** with of interdependent actions, he is obliged **Curtailment.** to compress these actions; but that the compression must be according to a scale which, while allowing them to be most readily perceived, must nevertheless allow nothing of their essential fullness to be lost. A mere curtailment or suppression of subordinate situations presented by the action would only produce the effect of disfiguring those which had been retained; for the reason that the justification required by Feeling for the stronger situations consists in their growing naturally out of those which are of lesser importance.

365. Such situations, therefore, as may be suppressed in the interest of poetical compactness and facility of survey must be transferred to, and represented simultaneously with, those which are retained—in the sense of being present in them in some way perfectly appreciable to Feeling. Feeling cannot however fail to observe them, as, in order to understand the main action, it must needs sympathise with the underlying motives from which it sprang; and it is from these lesser situations that such motives emerge.

366. The climax\* of an action is in itself a situation which, on account of speedily passing by, **Portrayal of** would remain a fact entirely deprived of **the Motive**, all meaning unless its appearance were rendered necessary by dispositions which have already, in themselves, elicited our sympathy. The very frequency of such situations would necessarily deprive the poet of all power to justify them to our feeling; for it is this justification (or, in other words, the indication of motives) which should occupy the space of the art-work, and this space will have been entirely squandered if taken up with a series of situations of the action for which the necessary justification has not been forthcoming.

367. The poet therefore is obliged for the sake of clearness so to limit the situations presented by his action as to gain sufficient room for complete exposition of the motives necessary to justify those which he has retained. This implies that all motives which lay in the situations suppressed by him must be dovetailed into those of the principal action; but in such a way as not to appear detached, considering that detachment would make them require their own particular situations in the action; or, in other words, the restoration of just those situations which had already been suppressed. It is therefore necessary so to include them that, far from inflicting a dispersion upon the principal motive, they may, on the contrary, contribute to its strength—as one complete whole.

---

\* Die Spitze einer Handlung ist an sich ein flüchtig vorübergehender Moment.

368. This increase of strength for the motive carries with it the necessity of a strengthening, in **Correspondence in** turn, of the situation presented by the action also; as the latter is, in itself, **Strength of Motive and Situation.** merely the utterance with which the motive must be in accord. A strong motive cannot find utterance in a weak situation of the action; for, in such case, both action and motive would become unintelligible. Principal motives, when thus strengthened, have already taken into themselves sundry motives which in ordinary life are only expressed by several situations of the action; and, in order to give intelligible utterance to such motives, their action must be proportionately strengthened, and their unity more powerful and comprehensive than that which we meet with in ordinary life—where the very same action would arise only in connection with several others of lesser importance, besides occupying a more extended space, and spreading over a greater duration of time.

369. The poet, in course of compressing these actions as well as the space and time-duration in order to facilitate clear survey of his work, had something different to do from merely making cuts in it; for he had to condense its whole essential contents.

370. Actual life can only understand this condensed form of itself when it appears magnified, strengthened and extraordinary in comparison. It is just the diversity of **Utility of the Compressed Survey.** action and the distribution over time and space which prevents man from understanding his own life's activity. In the picture of

this activity, however, as compressed in order to be clear, and as offered to him for survey in the form given to it by the poet, there appears a concise representation of the most powerful situation which this activity presents; and this, though separately considered it might appear as strange and marvellous, yet, by including within itself all traits of strangeness and marvellousness, it causes the spectator to conceive it as by no means a marvel—but, on the contrary, to accept it as an intelligible representation of reality.

371. By means of this use of the marvellous, however, the poet is enabled to represent the most immeasurable extent of mutual relations\* in a state of unity which everyone can understand.

372. The more extensive or comprehensive the mutual relations may be which he thus desires to **Correspond.** make plain, the greater strength he has **ence of** to allow to the qualities presented by his **Strength of** figures.† The movement which these **Character** figures present will also necessitate his **and Extent** bringing space and time into accordance **of Mutual** with it, by compressing these from their **Relations.** most far-reaching extent into a correspondingly wonderful formation. He will convert the properties presented by endlessly distributed fragments of time and space, into the contents of one such pro-

---

\* Vermöge dieses Wunders ist der Dichter aber fähig, die unermesslichsten Zusammenhänge in allverständlichster Einheit darzustellen.

† Desto stärker hat er nur die Eigenschaften seiner Gestalten zu steigern.

perty of intensified character—just as he had previously collected the distributed motives into one of principal character; and he will give increased force to the expression of this property—just as he had previously strengthened the action, so as to bring it into accord with the strengthening of its motive.

373. Even the most unusual formations resulting from this procedure of the poet can never really prove to be unnatural; for the reason that they do not distort nature, but only consolidate its utterances by presenting them collectively in the form of one single picture capable of being easily viewed and understood by the artistic man. Nothing but the knowledge we acquire through experience of Nature in all its essentials will ever enable us to attain to the poetical boldness necessary for the grouping together of its utterances into such a picture.

---

#### THE RELATION OF MAN TO NATURE.

374. All the while that Nature's manifestations appeared to man only as something whereupon to exercise his fantasy, imaginative power had to remain in a state of subjection to them. Then, it was only the nature of these manifestations, so far as revealed by appearances, which governed and determined the imaginative power; even, also, in its survey of such objects as concerned humanity itself.



375. The way in which this happened was that it introduced into the scope of imagination (and as a result of the instinctive idea that there was some power exterior both to nature and humanity) the element of the unexplainable (or rather the unexplained); and this, finally taking the form of miracle, set both nature and humanity aside. Then, as reaction began powerfully to assert itself against the belief in miracles, even the poet had to yield to the rational prosaic demand, by discarding all use of the marvellous element in his conceptions; and, moreover, this happened at a time when natural manifestations hitherto regarded only with a fantastic eye were just beginning to be made the objects of scientific investigations.

376. But, whilst Science retained with regard to the nature of these manifestations the attitude of holding that only the anatomical discovery of their interior composition in detail was capable of bringing them within comprehension, its condition continued to be disturbed. Thus, it is only since we have recognised Nature as a living organism (and not as a mechanism intentionally constructed), and since we have therefore become clear that Nature was not *created*, but that it is itself the *ever-being* who possesses both the producing and bearing of masculine and feminine faculties within itself—it is only since we have perceived that time and space, instead of circumscribing Nature as we had thought, are but abstractions of its reality, and that we may well make ourselves contented with this knowledge, being aware that we need not fly for con-

firmation of it to mathematical calculations for discovering remote distances, considering that the smallest manifestations of Nature lying nearest to us prove the very same facts as efficiently as those could do which lie at the remotest distance—it is, in short, only since we have acquired these views of Nature's manifestations that we can truly say that we have known anything about them.\*

But, since then, we also know that we are here expressly in order to enjoy Nature; the proof being that we are equipped, or, in other words, provided with faculties, for doing so.

377. The most reasonable enjoyment of Nature is, however, that which satisfies our universal capacity for enjoyment; for it is only by the **The Poet's Conception of the Enjoyment of Nature.** universality of human receptive organs, and their maximum capacity to rise to opportunities for enjoyment, that the measure according to which man has to enjoy life can be taken. Thus, for the artist who is conscious of this maximum capacity for enjoyment, it becomes the sole standard; and, by it, he measures all manifestations which in their connection with others he wishes to communicate.

378. The standard itself does not exact accordance with Nature's utterances in her manifestations any farther than is involved by agreement with essentials of her being. The poet, in strengthening or uplifting these, does not distort, therefore, but merely condenses them in his utterance; and this in

---

\* Erst von da an sind wir über sie im Gewissen.

a degree corresponding to the maximum excitement of human longing to understand some extremely great contexture of mutual relations.

379. The poet needs a deep acquaintance with Nature before he can bring its manifestations before us in this wonderful form; for, it is only by such presentation that they become intelligible to us, as conditions attending human actions in their loftiest phase.

380. The intellect only perceives Nature in her state of pure actuality; and, after dividing her into her separate component parts, should the **The Individual** wish arise to see those parts exhibited in **realisation** of Nature. their living and organic relation, the involuntary effect will be to disturb the intellect's contemplation by a mood which is bound to become more and more excited until it settles down into a mood of feeling. Under the influence of this mood man again and instinctively refers Nature to himself; this individual human nature of his having been, in fact, what originally caused in him the mood in which he regarded Nature according to one definite impression.

381. When his feeling is most highly excited man regards Nature more in the light of a sympathising being; as it then actually does, by the character of its manifestations, invariably control also that of the human mood. It is only when his mind is in a state of entirely egoistical coldness that he can avoid its immediate operation; though, even then, he must inwardly admit that its indirect influence upon him is still decisive.

382. When in a state of higher emotion, man

perceives no longer anything *accidental* in his con-

**The Relation of Man to Nature.** tact with natural manifestations. The utterances of nature which seem to affect our every-day life, quite undesignedly, by force of the well-grounded organic mutual relations existing between natural manifestations, only produce upon us the effect of accident if our mood is either indifferent, or if we are caught in the toils of egoism; in which case we have either no time, or no inclination, to probe the question of these natural mutual relations. We regard this accident according to the intentions which govern the object we have in view; deeming it to be either favourable—and therefore as one of which the influence is to be utilised; or unfavourable—and therefore as one of which the influence is to be avoided.

383. He who is deeply moved, when suddenly he turns from his inner mood to confront the surroundings of nature, finds therein, according to the character of their utterance for the time being, either nourishment for the further uprise of his mood, or he is incited thereby to change it. No matter to whom he may feel that he owes this control or support—to that source he will ascribe a power which will be greater or less in degree, as his mood for the moment is of greater or less loftiness. He instinctively feels his own relation to Nature, thus experienced, to have been also expressed by a great mutual relation between natural manifestations and himself—and his mood. He recognises the latter in Nature again, either as nourished or transformed by her influence; and he accordingly refers her most

powerful utterances to himself, in the same degree that he feels controlled by them.

384. In this great mutual effect which man has traced the manifestations of Nature crowd in upon his feeling until they attain a definite form; and to this form he assigns, to begin with, an individual phase of emotion, appropriate to the impression produced upon himself and his own mood; and, finally, some means intelligible to himself of expressing this emotion. He is then speaking to Nature and she is answering him. In this conversation with her, does he not better understand her than the man who is looking at her through a microscope? What does the latter know of Nature—except that which it is unnecessary for him to know?

385. The former, however, gathers from her something which, in the most excited moments of his being, is a necessity; and from which he not only learns to grasp Nature upon a scale which is infinitely great, but also to understand her in a sense which it is not given to the most comprehensive intellect to realise.

386. In so doing man is *loving* Nature. He is ennobling and exalting her to the position of a sympathetic participator in the loftiest mood of man; whose physical existence she has spontaneously made dependent upon herself.\*

---

\* (Original note.) What are a thousand of the finest Arabian stallions (to those who buy them in English horse-markets on test of their growth and useful qualities) in comparison with what *Xanthus*, the horse of Achilles, was

## THE NEW-FOUND LEGEND OF PURE EXPRESSION.

387. Should we now wish to find an exact definition for the poet's work, taken according to the scale of his utmost conceivable power, we **The Drama as Nature's** should have to call it:

**Exponent.** *The Legend which is justified by that clearest human consciousness which has been newly discovered, as corresponding with the survey of ever-present life—and which can also be only intelligibly represented in the drama.*

388. It now only remains for us to inquire as to the most intelligible means of expression to be adopted in order to represent this Legend dramatically, and this obliges us to go back to that situation presented by the entire art-work which its very nature prescribes as a condition, this being—the necessary *justification of the action through* its motives; in order to effect which the poetical intelligence has recourse to spontaneous feeling by way of utilising its willing co-operation as a means of ensuring the comprehension of these motives.

389. We saw that the compression essential to practical grasp of the situations presented by the action, which are not only various but extend to manifold subdivisions in actuality, depended upon

---

so him in forewarning him of his death? Candidly, I would not exchange this prophetic horse of the god-like racer for *Bucephalus*, the highly-trained horse of Alexander; who, as we know, flattered the portrait of a horse which had been painted by Appelles so far as to give it a neigh!

the earnest desire of the poet to represent an extensive mutual relation of manifestations of human life, as the only means of making the necessity of those manifestations understood.

390. In order to accord with his main object, he could only effect this compression by including **Retrospect** (amongst the motives of those situations of **Dramatic** in the action which were destined for **Procedure**, actual representation) the motives also appertaining to those situations which had been suppressed; and by justifying them, as towards Feeling, in such a way as to make them appear a strengthening of the principal motives; the latter, in their turn, naturally requiring a strengthening of their corresponding situations.

391. Finally, we saw that this strengthening of the actions' situation could only be effected by applying poetic art to the marvellous element; which, while entirely corresponding to human nature, raises its capabilities to a degree of power unattainable in ordinary life—that marvellous element which, whilst not requiring to be exterior to life, so far proceeds from it as to make itself perceived above the level of its customary phases; and we have now to come to a definite understanding about what this strengthening of the motives should consist of, which, of themselves, thus further necessitate a strengthening of the situation as it appears in action.

What is "strengthening of the motive"—in the sense above assigned to that expression?

392. We have already seen the impossibility of

any *accumulation* of motives being intended under **Epitome** this expression; as these, by rendering of **Dramatic** ample utterance in action impossible, **Procedure.** would necessarily fail to be understood by Feeling and remain unjustified to reason itself—assuming them to be explainable at all.

393. Many motives when subjected to condensed treatment appear as merely insignificant capricious and unworthy, and as susceptible of application only in caricature of any action of importance. The strengthening of a motive cannot therefore be made to consist of merely adding to it other lesser motives, but of completely merging several motives into the one in question.

394. The peculiar interest attaching to different men, at different times, and under different circumstances, as well as the interest corresponding to these differences (which constitutes the specially forming influence) should be made to assume the character of an interest in one particular man—a man belonging to one definite time and one whose situation consists of definite circumstances; all these men, times and circumstances, fundamentally of similar type, being taken as, by themselves, showing the conscious spectator some special trait of the human nature.

395. In the interest of this man, every exteriorly differing element must be lifted into the one definite whole; whilst the interest in this definite whole must be stated in a manner representing its greatest and most exhaustive range of capabilities.

396. This, however, amounts to nothing less than



taking away everything of minute or chance character from this interest and presenting it in its full truth as a necessary and purely human expression of feeling. Any man is incapable of such an expression of feeling who is still not at one with himself respecting his necessary interest and whose emotion has not yet discovered the object which can incite it to a definite and necessary utterance, but who is still divided between powerless accidental and unsympathetic exterior manifestations.

397. Upon this powerful manifestation arresting his attention from the outer world it either strikes him as being so strangely hostile that his whole self is gathered up in the endeavour to cast it off, or he may be so irresistibly attracted by it that he longs to yield up to it his entire individuality. But in either case his interest will now, besides having become fully definite, be so comprehensive that it will completely consume and take up into itself all his previous divided and powerless interests.

398. The situation in which this *union of interests* takes place is the act for which the poet has to prepare in order to strengthen the motive in such a way that, therefrom, a strong situation of the action may proceed; and this preparation is the final work in crowning his endeavours.

399. Articulate speech as his medium for exercise of the poetic faculty has hitherto sufficed, because hitherto the interests which he has had to describe have been such that their indication and outline has

incited no desire on the part of any necessary feeling to participate. They have been interests subject to exterior and manifold influences from given circumstances, without these being attended by any inner working in which the inner feeling had been driven, in its turn, to any necessary activity—allowing it no choice and determining all exterior feature.

400. In all this the understanding was still supreme; combining the material, dividing it into constituents, or fitting together this and that constituent, in this or that manner. **The Intellectual in Dramatic Procedure.** Moreover, the understanding had hitherto been under no obligation *actually to produce*; but had merely to describe, to draw comparisons, and to explain similars by similars. For all these purposes its medium of articulate speech was not only sufficient, but it was the only one by which it could possibly make itself intelligible.

401. But the time arrives when it becomes a question of giving *reality* to what he has prepared; and when he has no longer to separate or compare, but to communicate the motive by an expression of feeling. **The Realisation of Dramatic Conception.** This motive allows of no choice by offering itself definitely and without conditions; and it is thus conclusive and strong to the extent of possessing decisive power.

402. In communicating this motive by expression of a feeling which is necessary and commanding the poet is powerless to effect his purpose by the aid of an articulate language capable only of

description and indication, unless he intensifies that language in the same way as he has already intensified his motive.

This intensification is precisely what can only be accomplished by the effusion of ordinary speech into the *tonal language*.

## CHAPTER VI.

### EPITOME.

FORM OF DRAMATIC ART-WORK. THE REPRESENTATION OF THE  
PURELY-HUMAN.

---

#### *The Speech and Intellect.*

(403) The mutual relations of tonal language, articulate speech, feeling, intellect, legend, history, lyric poetic art and fantasy. (404) The course of development of these relations one continual progress. (405) Characterisation of this progress.

---

#### *The Tonal Language and Articulate Speech.*

(406) Man's primitive expression of feeling. (407) The addition of gesture to vocal expression. (408) Characterisation of the Folk-song. (409) The rise of speech. (410) The clothing of the sounding vowel. (411) This clothing analogous to that of exterior objects. (412) The instinctive groupings of articulate speech. (413) The poetising power of speech. (414) This poetising faculty the origin of the initial rhyme.

---

#### *Alliteration.*

(415) The various descriptions of initial rhyme. (416) The incentive to distribution and arrangement of roots of rhyme. (417) Mutual relation of music and verse. (418) Length of verse dependent upon breath capacity. (419)

Relation of accentuated intonations and gesture with rhythmical measure. (420) Facility afforded by reference to natural conditions.

---

*Terminal Rhyme and Conversational Speech.*

(421) Union of Gesture, Intonation and Articulation as speech. (422) Cessation of the power of inventing new roots of speech. (423) Complex use of existing roots of speech and its outcome in ordinary prose. (424) Consequent loss of original intonations. (425) Necessity thus created for the terminal rhyme. (426) Terminal rhyme and the attendant failure to correspond with the accentuated intonations of melody. (427) Consequent failure to unite articulate and tonal speech. (428) The comparison with primitive melodic utterance unfavourable to modern articulate speech. (429) Self-sufficiency of modern articulate speech. (430) Modern prose detached from Feeling. (431) Unnatural character of our ordinary speech. (432) Its appeal only to the Understanding. (433) Our feeling merely described by it. (434) Its general imperfection as a means of communication.

---

*The Tonal Language; or the Language of Feeling.*

(435) Impossibility of poetic creation in modern speech. (436) The reason of articulate speech not lending itself to poetic objects. (437) The necessity of a remoter standpoint for poetic objects. (438) Even the poetic faculty requires a condensing medium for this purpose. (439) Tonal language the original means of communication of inner soul-feeling. (440) Misapplication of the tonal language in modern Opera. (441) The prepared melody. (442) The poet's favourable position for use of the tonal language. (443) The poet's procedure. (444) The legitimate use of music coincident with entry of the Drama. (445) The conditions under which the application is made. (446) Natural character of the expression evolved. (447) The relation of the poet's forms to those of real life. (448) The poet's mode of expression. (449) Danger of employing that of everyday life. (450) Ridiculous effect of alternate employment of both modes.

*The Union of Intellect and Feeling or of Word and Tone-  
Language in the Domain of the Purely-Human.*

(451) The tonal language a poetical necessity. (452) The tonal language as one altogether differing from the speech medium. (453) The absorbent element for poetical intention. (454) The maternal element by which melodic expression was first produced. (455) Justification of articulate speech in the tonal language. (456) Fantasy as mediatory between Understanding and Feeling. (457) The purely-human element. (458) Love, the incentive of the poetical Understanding. (459) Characterisation of this love. (460) The fructifying seed of the poetic subject brought forth into being by means of the tonal language.

-

## CHAPTER VI.

### FORM OF DRAMATIC ART-WORK.

#### THE REPRESENTATION OF THE PURELY-HUMAN.

---

#### THE SPEECH AND INTELLECT.

403. THE tonal language is the beginning and the end of articulate speech; in the same way that  
**The** Feeling is the beginning and the end of  
**Relation** Understanding; Legend the beginning  
**to Drama of** and end of History; and Lyric the begin-  
**the Lyric** ning and end of poetic art. The inter-  
**Element.** posing element, both between the beginning and middle point, and between middle point and that of conclusion, in each case, is Fantasy.

404. The course of this development is, however, such that it is never a return, but one continual progress until the highest human capability is attained; and it is a progress effected, step by step, not merely by humanity in general, but, according to its nature, by every social individual.

405. Just as instinctive feeling contains all seed for development of that understanding which, in its turn, comprises the necessity of justifying instinctive

feeling—so that only the man who is justified by comprehension of this feeling can be considered a perfectly reasoning human being—and, just as, in the Legend, which is similarly justified by the history which sprang from it, that picture of life is first gained which is actually intelligible; so does Lyric contain all seed of that essentially poetic art by which it is necessarily in the end alone justified. And the work which provides this justification and which is precisely the highest possible human art-work is the *complete drama*.

---

#### THE TONAL LANGUAGE AND ARTICULATE SPEECH.

406. The most primitive medium of utterance of the inner man, however, is the tonal language; as the **The Vowel Utterance as Basis.** most involuntary expression of a feeling awakened within him by exterior causes. In any case, the first human mode of expression was one similar to that which is still peculiar to brute animals; and we can substantially realise this for ourselves at any moment by removing the dumb consonants from our articulate speech, and *allowing only the sounding vowels* to remain. In these vowels, when we think of them as divested of their consonants, and imagine them as merely the expression of a manifold and graduated exchange of the various kinds of inner feelings, ranging from the painful to the joyful, we acquire a picture of that first emotional language of mankind which could certainly have only consisted of a joining



together of expressive intonations; presenting, by themselves, entirely the character of melody.

407. This melody became rhythmical through being accompanied by suitable gestures; in such a way as, simultaneously, to bear the appearance of an inner expression of that which, by gesture, was only outwardly indicated. It thus also borrowed the measure of gesture in point of time—or, in other words, the melody borrowed its rhythm from these gestures; and in such a way as again to apply this rhythm to the gestures, in the sense of a melodically justified measure for their display.

408. This *rhythmical melody*, therefore, is one which we should treat unjustly by estimating its **Gesture and effect and beauty** as of little worth; considering not only the endlessly greater variety of capacity for emotion possessed by man as compared with the brute creation, but especially the power of an inconceivable amount of gradation of effect between the inner expression afforded by the voice and the outward expression afforded by gesture\*—this not being at the command of any beast. Finally, this melody, by virtue of its origin and nature, was so regulative of the measure of verse that the latter appears to have been frankly subordinated to it, as we may still gather from close examination of any genuine folk-song; in which we can clearly recognise that the verse is subject to the melody, and indeed this often happened to such an

---

\* (Original note.) The wood-bird is the creature expressing its sensations in the most decidedly melodic manner, but is without any power to accompany its song by gesture.

extent that the verse had to fit itself to the melody even where the sense was concerned, and in respect of matters which were essentially those of melody alone.

409. This manifestation exhibits to us very clearly the rise of speech.\* By means of words, the sounding vowel of the pure speech of feeling seeks to become appreciably distinctive; in the same way that the inner feeling seeks to distinguish between exterior objects working upon the emotions, to express itself with regard to them, and finally to intelligibly explain the impulse inwardly felt, inducing it to make the communication.

410. In the pure tonal language the communication by feeling of the impression it had received was the latter's means of self-announcement; and this, supported by gesture, it was enabled to accomplish by aid of the most manifold rise and fall, lengthening and shortening, or increase and decrease of the sounding-vowel. In order, however, to indicate the distinctions between exterior objects themselves, Feeling was obliged to clothe the sounding-vowel in a distinguishing garment; and to do this in such a way as to derive this garment from the impression of the object, and therefore practically from the object itself.

411. This garment was woven out of dumb consonants, which were used as commencement or termination of the vowel sound or as both together; and, by fitting into it so as to enclose it, they pre-

---

\* (Original note.) I mentally view the rise of speech out of melody not as in chronologic, but architectonic, sequence.

sented it in such a way as to hold it to one definite and distinct announcement—just as distinct objects themselves are exteriorly and separately enclosed or announced, also by means of a garment. Thus, for example, the beast by its hide; the tree by its bark; and so forth. The vowels, thus clothed and thereby effectively distinguished, form the *roots of speech*; from the adjustment and combination of which the entire physically appreciable edifice of our endlessly subdivided articulate speech has been erected.

412. But let us first observe how pronounced was the instinctive caution exhibited by speech, in withdrawing but very gradually from the maternal breast which had given it nourishment, and from the milk upon which it had fed—the sounding-vowel. **The Formation of Roots of Speech.** Conformably with an unaffected view of nature, and with the longing to communicate the impressions derived from such a view, it began by grouping such things as were related, or of similar kind; in order, by this sort of combination, not only to render related things evident by their resemblance, and similar things intelligible by their relationship, but also through the use of an expression resting upon similarity and relationship of its own impulses, to succeed in impressing the feeling in a correspondingly more definite and intelligible manner.

413. By thus proceeding, speech had at once made its sensuously poetising power manifest. In roots of speech it had reached the stage of forming distinct expressions for corresponding impulses; and this by means of taking the sounding-vowel (which had been applied in mere subjective expressions of

feeling inspired by an object) and, according to the measure of the impression, clothing it in an enveloping garment of dumb consonants; which, as towards feeling, bore the relation of an objective expression prompted by some quality exhibited by the object itself.

414. When, at this point, speech began to combine such roots according to their similarity and relationship, it rendered the impression of the object clear to Feeling (in the same degree as the expression made use of to denote it) through the latter being correspondingly increased in strength; and thus it indicated the object itself, in its turn, as strengthened—or, in other words, as one which, though admittedly manifold, was yet by its nature, as exhibited in similarity and relationship, but one in character.

This poetising impulse of speech is shown in alliteration, or initial rhyme; wherein we recognise that property of poetising speech which has existed from time immemorial.

---

#### ALLITERATION.

415. In initial rhyme, or alliteration, the related "roots of speech" are fitted to one another in such a way that, in presenting to the sense of hearing a succession of similar sounds, they also bind together similar objects into one complete picture; wherewith Feeling desires to utter some conclusion in their regard. The resemblance thus appreciable to our sense of hearing is acquired by them, either through

that kind of relation between sounding-vowels which arises from an "open" commencement without initial consonant;\* or, through repeating one consonant, as being characteristic of some corresponding peculiarity of the object alluded to;† or, through repeating consonants to close the root of speech as with an assonance, and upon the assumption that the individualising strength lies in such a termination.‡

\* (Original note.)

"Erb' und eigen"  
"Immer und ewig."

(Translator's note.)

In order to point this for the English reader the common expressions:

"All in all,"  
"ever and ever,"  
"out and out"

may be instanced, as beginning with vowels, and as bespeaking emphasis merely by repetition. This puts the case even more strongly than Wagner gives it; for "immer und ewig" (by failing to commence with the same vowel) do not present the matter with any greater force than in our "in and out"; or "under and over."

† (Original note.)

"Ross und Reiter"  
"Froh und frei."

(Translator's note.)

This kind of alliteration is far more plentiful, and innumerable instances will at once occur to the English reader. As a suggestion, and in order to enable him to grasp the idea quickly, "rhyme and reason," "thick and thin," may be mentioned.

‡ (Original note.)

"Hand und Mund"  
"Recht und pflicht."

(Translator's note.)

The German language is far richer in alliterations of this

416. The distribution and arrangement of these roots in rhyme is effected by virtue of laws of the same nature as those which impel us, irrespective of the particular art-direction concerned, to repeat, as necessary for the understanding, the motives to which we attach a special importance. We accordingly place these motives between others which are of smaller weight besides being dependent upon their principals; and we do this in such a way as to cause the latter to become clearly recognised as dominant and essential.

417. Being obliged (in order to favour a full exposition of all the penetrating effect possible to be exercised by initial rhyme upon our music) to keep in hand the opportunity of returning to this subject for the purpose of submitting it to a closer treatment, I deem it enough—for the moment—to call attention to the determinate character of the relation in which this initial rhyme, and the verse concluded by it, stood to that melody which we have to accept as the original announcement of that human feeling which, though more manifold, was in spite of its greater variety, rounded off into a state of unity.

418. It is only by this melody that we can explain to ourselves, not only the duration of the verse, but

---

kind than is our own; and even such as we have are mostly of German origin. "Right and might" is one of the most familiar; to which may be added, "to rest and rust," as both coming to us from the German. That the attraction still exists may be perceived by the existence of such modern titles as "Box and Cox," whilst to "mend or end" a thing is quite an everyday expression.

also the position and general character of the initial rhyme, as determining this duration. The melody itself was, moreover, dependent in its turn upon the natural capability of the human breath; and the amount of stronger intonations possible for one breath to produce. The amount of time allowable for a melodic section depended upon the time occupied by the voice in outpour of the breath; during which it was necessary to round off some portion of the melody, thus rendering it relatively complete.

419. The possibilities afforded by this duration, however, affected also the number of accentuated in-

**The** tonations allowable during the melodic  
**Conditions** section; which became less in the event of  
**of Metre.** these accentuated intonations being of passionate strength (on account of the more rapid consumption of breath which such occasion) or, more, in the case of weaker intonations—on account of the breath then not requiring to be so quickly expended. These accentuated intonations which, by coinciding with gesture, fell into accord with the rhythmical measure, became condensed in speech in the form of roots of speech with initial rhymes; and thus they determined the number and position of the latter, just in the same way as the melodic section, being dependent upon breath-duration, had determined the length of the verse.

420. How easy does the explanation and comprehension of the whole subject of *Metre* become if we only give ourselves the reasonable trouble of going back to the natural conditions upon which all human artistic power depends, and which can alone

enable us to regain the power of producing what is real in Art.

For the moment, however, let us follow the course of development taken by articulate speech; and, for the subject of Melody which it thus abandons, let us reserve the right of a later return.

---

#### TERMINAL RHYME AND CONVERSATIONAL SPEECH.

421. The poetic impulse, originally existing only as an activity of the inner feelings, gradually became an affair of the understanding, and, in the same degree that this occurred, the **Articulate Speech as Offspring of Intonation and Gesture.** three modes of speech (represented respectively by gesture, intonation and articulation) resolved themselves into one; articulate speech being the child who, forsaking father and mother, went out into the world alone to do as best he could. Objects and their relation to his feeling began to accumulate before the eye of this growing youth; and, just in the same degree, those words and word-combinations accumulated which the objects and their relations required for their designation.

422. All the while the young man kept Nature steadily in view and remained able to take feeling as the basis of his conceptions he went on inventing roots of speech which reflected the character of those words and relations. But the stress of life, in causing him at last to turn his back upon this fructifying source of the power of speech, brought about



also the corruption of his power of invention; and he had then to be satisfied with the store which had been bequeathed to him as an inheritance but which was not a possession which he could perpetually renew.

423. The result of this was that articulate speech had to fit the inherited roots of speech into one

**The Application of Roots of Speech.** another in a two and threefold manner for the indication of objects exterior to nature; and, in favour of this process, he had to shorten them—besides also, and

in particular, disfiguring them to an extent which rendered them no longer recognisable. This was done by dissipating the euphony of their sounding-vowels until it became a mere jungle of hasty speech; as well as by painfully torturing the living flesh of language by the accumulation of those dumb-consonants which became necessary for the binding together of roots possessed of no mutual relation.\*

424. Thus language, in losing that instinctive understanding of her own roots which was only to be rendered possible through Feeling, could no longer so employ these roots as to reproduce the original intonations of that mother of all melody.

425. It either happened that (in situations where, as in Greek antiquity, dance remained an inevitable element of Lyric) language had to be satisfied by hugging the rhythm of the melody as fondly as possible or else (in situations where, as amongst the

---

\* Without considering Wagner's argument to be thereby weakened, we may remark that these expressions are of special application to the German language. (Translator.)

modern nations, dance became as towards Lyric a more and more completely outlying element) language had to seek for some other connecting link suitable for connecting her with the melodic breathing pauses. This she managed to secure in terminal rhyme.

426. Terminal rhyme, to which we likewise must return on account of the position which it occupies towards our own music, was placed at the outgoing of each melodic section, without retaining power to correspond to the accentuated intonations of the melody itself.

**The  
Progress of  
Terminal  
Rhyme.**

427. It no longer cemented the natural bond of articulate and tonal speech in which radical relationships to these melodic intonations possessed by initial rhythm intelligibly exhibited both exterior and interior sense, but it contented itself with fluttering loosely at the close of each melodic band—where the verse always assumed a position more and more arbitrary and intractable.

428. The more tangled and involved, however, was the process which articulate speech became at last obliged to adopt in order to indicate objects and relations which appertained to social conventions only and which had nothing to do with the nature of things upon which all else should depend, the more it was obliged to busy itself with finding terms for ideas which, though derived from natural manifestations, had now to relate to combinations of these abstractions. The more articulate speech had, for this purpose, to screw up the original signification of the roots to two and threefold meanings

—meanings which were now artificially set under them, being merely thought, but no longer felt—and the more circumstantially it had to dress up for itself the mechanical apparatus which was necessary for setting these screws and levers in motion and for their support—so much the more stubborn and strange it became as compared with that primitive melody, of which it finally lost even the remembrance, falling breathless and toneless into the dreadful turmoil of prose.

429. The understanding, in the state of compression given to it by the play of Fantasy upon Feeling, acquired, in prosaic articulate  
**Articulate** speech, a medium by means of which  
**Speech as** it could make itself understood singly;  
**Intellectual** and, indeed, quite in a manner beyond  
**Medium.** Feeling's comprehension.

430. In modern prose we speak a language which we do not stipulate for as connected with feeling; seeing that its connection with the very objects by which, in virtue of their impression on us, the formation of the roots of speech was controlled according to our powers, has become by us no longer recognisable.

431. We speak this language just as it has been taught us from our earliest years; but not after the manner of grasping, nourishing and shaping which belongs to our grown-up independence of feeling, or which proceeds either from ourselves or from the objects in question.

432. This speech, the customs as well as the demands of which as founded upon the logic of the understanding we have unconditionally to obey

if we want to hold communication with others, accordingly rests (as it appears to our feeling) upon a convention directed to one express object; that object being to make ourselves understood according to a given standard in which we think, and by which we *control* our feeling; and to do this in such a way that we explain to the understanding intentions which have already proceeded from it.

433. Our feeling, which unaided and instinctively expressed itself in its original speech, can, in this language, be merely described; and indeed only described in a far more roundabout fashion than an object of the understanding. The reason of this is that we are now obliged, in a complicated manner, to emerge from intellectual speech and return to its original stem; screwing ourselves down to that, in the same way as we had already screwed ourselves up therefrom. Our language accordingly, rests upon a convention which is partly religious, political and historical; and it was this convention which, in France, under the rulership of Louis XIV who may be regarded as its personification was very consistently made secure as a decreed standard, by an Academy subject to order.

434. This language not only possesses no basis of conviction of any enduring present or sympathetic character, but it is the precise contrary of such a conviction which has been instilled into us. We cannot, in one sense, even speak with one another through the medium of this language in such a way as to accord with our innermost feeling; for it

affords us no means for the invention which that agreement demands. It enables us to communicate our feelings, but only to the understanding; and not in the implicit confidence which attaches to Feeling. And thus it was quite consistent when, in our modern development, Feeling sought refuge from an absolute speech of this intellectual kind; and sought it in that absolute tonal language which constitutes our music of the present day.

---

#### THE TONAL LANGUAGE, OR THE LANGUAGE OF FEELING.

435. In modern speech poetic creation is impossible; or, in other words, a poetical subject cannot be carried to realisation in it, but can only be spoken of as if it were realised.

436. No poetical object is realised until it is communicated from the understanding to Feeling.

**Need for a** As the understanding only desires to  
**Condensing** communicate an object which in its own  
**Medium.** intellectual speech can be represented in complete detail it does not readily lend itself to one which is poetical and which has therefore a tendency to bind elements closely together, but inclines to a decomposing object or one which has a tendency to separate component parts.

437. The understanding poetically creates—only when it grasps these loosened elements according to their natural connection and desires to communicate them in their entirety as one reliable impression.

Such collective relation can only be viewed, as to its extent, from a remoter standpoint corresponding with the object and its intention, the picture which thus presents itself to the eye not being the actual reality of the object, but only that reality of aspect which is appreciable to the vision as the sum of these mutual relations.

438. The understanding, with its tendency to separate components, is incapable of recognising the actual reality otherwise than according to its constituents; which it communicates through its medium of modern intellectual speech. Only the poetical understanding can appreciate the ideal and sole intelligible reality in its complete sense, but even the poetic understanding can however only make this reality plain by adopting a condensing medium corresponding to the condensed object so as to allow of its being communicated to the feeling in the most intelligible manner.

439. We have seen that a great contexture of manifestations presenting the sole means of making them separately explainable can only be set before us by their being compressed. In respect of the manifestations of human life this compression amounts to a simplification. It also means (as in favour of this) a strengthening of the situations presented by the action, besides which the latter can only proceed from motives which have also been strengthened. A motive is strengthened however only by absorption of the various intellectual situations it contains into one decisive situation in which Feeling is supreme; and, of this, it is only through that ori-

**Tonal Lan-  
guage the  
Condensing  
Medium.**

ginal medium of inner soul-feeling—the tonal language—that the poet can make a convincing communication.

440. The poet however would have been obliged to see his intention remain unrealised had he chosen to reveal it crudely—by grasping at the saving expression of the tonal language only at the moment of his highest need. Had he waited for the situation where he wanted melody (as the most complete expression of uplifted feeling) to step in for the purpose of transforming the nakedness of articulate speech into the fullness of the tonal language, he would have driven both understanding and feeling into such an entire confusion that only by the most unreserved revelation of his object could he have managed to retrieve their condition. This would have amounted to his openly withdrawing all claim to an art-work; to addressing his intention as such to the understanding; and to presenting Feeling merely with a sentimental expression independent of any intention, and one merely dissolvent and superfluous—that, in fact, of our modern Opera.

441. The *prepared* melody is unintelligible to the understanding; as the latter's activity, previous to entry of the melody, had not only been undivided, but had been even employed for the purpose of indicating rising feelings. The understanding can participate in such melody only in proportion to the degree in which it has, thus, itself become the medium of Feeling; the feeling, that is, which, after

**Misapplication of the Tonal Language in Modern Opera.**

**The Correct Application of Tonal Language.**

passing through a growing excitement, has arrived at the completion of its most exhaustive expression.

442. In the gradual development of this expression towards its utmost fullness the understanding is enabled to participate from the instant when it first steps into the domain of Feeling. But, on the other hand, the poet occupies this region in a definite sense and as from that moment when, possessed of the drama's intention, he proceeds to its realisation; because, in the very longing for this realisation, he is already moved in this necessary and pressing manner by the identical feeling to which he wishes to communicate the object he has thought out: an object the sure and solving comprehension of which he desires to secure.

443. The poet can only hope to realise this as his intention, from the moment of his being *silent*

**Details of** with regard to it, and of his thus retain-  
**Procedure in** ing it as his own secret; by which is  
**Application** meant—so long as he avoids stating it  
**of the Tonal** in the *only speech* in which it can be  
**Language.** communicated as a naked intellectual object.

444. His saving work, or that which realises his intention, only begins from the time when he is able to express himself in that new speech which redeems and actualises what he seeks to utter; and in which he also can alone, in the end, deliver the deepest contents of his message in a perfectly convincing manner. It therefore only begins from the time when the Art-work strictly begins; which is—from the moment of the drama's first appearance.

445. The tonal language is, therefore, the medium of expression upon which the poet must



decide beforehand to rely; and by means of which he must make himself understood in turning from Understanding to Feeling. For this purpose, he has to place himself upon a ground from which he has intercourse with Feeling alone. Considering the necessarily strengthened motives of those strengthened situations, as presented by the action, for which the poetical understanding longs, they can only attain intelligible manifestation upon a basis which, itself, is also strictly one raised above everyday life; and, above all, its customary modes of expression. It is therefore also one which should tower above the level of ordinary expression; just as much as do those strengthened forms and motives over those of everyday life.

446. This expression, however, is no more exposed to being unnatural than the actions and motives with which it deals risk being devoid of natural and human qualities.

447. The forms of the poet must so far correspond to those of actual life as is involved by having to represent the latter in both its most compressed contexture as well as with the force of its highest excitement.

448. The mode of expression adopted should, therefore, also be restricted to that of the intensest human feeling in accordance with its utmost power of demonstration.

449. The forms of the poet would, however, appear unnatural in the event of their using for the maximum intensity of their motives and situations in action the medium of expression of everyday life.

450. They would, on the other hand, not only appear unintelligible but laughable also in the event of their making use of this ordinary medium of expression and an unconventional and nobler method, alternately; just in the same way as if, before our very eyes, and in ordinary life, they were to adopt, in turn, its common conditions and those of the elevated style of the poetic art-work.\*

---

THE UNION OF INTELLECT AND FEELING OR OF WORD  
AND TONE LANGUAGE IN THE DOMAIN OF THE  
PURELY-HUMAN.

451. If, now, we consider the poet's activity somewhat more closely, we perceive that realisation of his object consists of representation of the strengthened actions of his compressed forms; that he has solely to render this possible by means of the representation of their motives to feeling; and that, for this purpose, he has to adopt a means of expression which, in its turn, engages his activity in proportion to the degree in which the invention and setting forth of this expression brings strictly within possibility for the first time the presentation of those motives and actions.

---

\* (Original note.) This has in fact constituted an important and preponderating situation of our modern comic art.

452. This expression is, accordingly, the essential condition attached to the realisation of his intention, without conforming to which it could never successfully emerge from the region of thought into that of reality. The only expression to render this possible, however, is one *altogether different* from the speech-medium of the poetical understanding itself.

453. The understanding, therefore, falls under stress of the necessity of allying itself with an element capable of absorbing its poetical intention as a fructifying seed; and of so nourishing and forming this seed, that it may ultimately bring it forth, as a realising and saving expression of Feeling.

454. This is precisely that maternal element from the womb of which the original power of melodic expression (first fructified by natural, actual and exterior objects into articulations and articulate speech) came forth; just in the same way as the understanding grew from Feeling, and became accordingly the compression of the womanly into a manly element; one possessed of the faculty of communication.

455. Through this fructification, the understanding now finds itself surrounded by Feeling; justified therein; reflected therein; and in this **Effect upon the Under- standing of its Alliance with Tonal Language.** mirror-like reflection, recognises itself; or, in other words, is generally recognisable. It has now to fructify Feeling; and, just as it does so, it urges the word of the intellect to recognise itself again in tones

and articulate speech to find justification in the tonal language.\*

456. The incentive which awakens this impulse, and moves it to its utmost excitement, is exterior to the one who is subject to it; and consists of the object of his longing. This object first presents itself to him in all its charm through Fantasy; that omnipotent mediatory element between Understanding and Feeling. The charm of Fantasy, however, does not enable him to satisfy himself until he succeeds in pouring out his being into the fullest reality of his object.

457. This charm is the penetrative working of the "eternal womanly," which lures the egoistic

**The** manly understanding away from itself;  
**Womanly** but this is only possible as the result of  
**Relation of** the womanly arousing in him that which  
**the Tonal** is related to itself. That relation, how-  
**Language to** ever—the relation of Feeling to the  
**Dramatic** understanding—constitutes the *purely-*  
**Art.** *human*; and displays the human species, as such. It is by this purely human element that both masculine and feminine are nourished; and it is in this that, bound together in love, they constitute the *human being*.

458. The necessary incentive of the poetical understanding in poetical creation is love, therefore: and, in fact, the love of the man to the woman.

---

\* (Original note.) Would it be deemed trivial on my part if, in this connection, and with reference to my exposition of the Legend which here specially applies, I recall the case of Œdipus who was born of Jocasta, and, with Jocasta, produced the redeeming Antigone?

459. It is not, however, that frivolous undisciplined love in which man wishes to satisfy himself by an indulgence; but rather the deep longing of the man to know himself, apart from his egoism; and to learn to do so in the delight of the woman which he longs to share.

This longing is the creative situation of the understanding.

460. The seed necessary to be given forth is compressed from the noblest powers of the understanding in the extreme ardency of love's excitement. It proceeds from the incentive to outpour or communicate itself for fructification, and is indeed in one sense itself the very embodiment of incentive.

*This procreative seed is the poetical object, which leads Music (as the glorious, loving woman) to the material which causes it to bear.*

---

We will now turn our attention to the act of bringing forth the fruit derived from this material.\*

---

\* This is Wagner's reference to the subject of the concluding volume: viz., "Poetry and Music in the Drama of the Future." (Translator's note.)











